

WORLDVIEW

WHAT WE BELIEVE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE, AND WHY THEY ARE WRONG

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WORLDVIEW

WHAT WE BELIEVE, WHAT THEY BELIEVE, AND WHY THEY ARE WRONG

KEVIN SWANSON



In Gratitude

This project is the culmination of almost five decades of study on my part. At twelve years of age, I was assiduously working through theological conundrums as I sat listening to my missionary father teach from the Word to a small Japanese congregation in our living room in Karatsu, Japan. I still have some of my notes from those early years. I remember taking my first seminary course on theology in 1979. I was sixteen years old when my dad signed me up for the course.

I am thankful for my mother's continual encouragements and prayers through every one of my 61 years. I am especially grateful for the primary influences in my life, which include, first and foremost, my father, Ralph Swanson. After that, I have profited greatly from the writings and ministry work of Pastor Albert N. Martin, Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Pastor Ed Bryant, Pastor Scott Brown, Pastor Joe Morecraft, John Frame, Dr. Leonard Coppes, Dr. Joel Beeke, and Dr. Greg Bahnsen. From my youth, I have appreciated and repeatedly returned to the writings of Thomas Brooks, Thomas Watson, John Flavel, Jeremiah Burroughs, John Owen, C.H. Spurgeon, A.W. Tozer, and Andrew Murray. My theological formulations are guided by the church councils, the Reformed confessions of faith, and primarily by the Word of God.

I am much indebted to Douglas Bond, Dr. Phillip Kayser, and Pastor Joshua Schwisow for their assistance with content editing. Some of my favorite memories from the last twelve years have been the hours spent with Joshua Schwisow going over Scripture and theology out on our back porch—iron sharpening iron, studying and praying, and assimilating and applying Biblical truths to much personal edification. And I am thankful for the participation and patience of my discipleship group as I worked through the manuscript with them: Kazuki Maeda, Masaki Maeda, Judah Sosa, Christopher Frausto, William Walker, Tim Hong, and Ming Zhou.

But mostly, I praise our God and Father that He has revealed His glorious truths to us for our eternal salvation and life! Praise Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit to illumine, to guide, to revive, to comfort, and to counsel each day of our lives! Praise be to Christ who is the final revelation of the Father!

Kevin Swanson

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INTRODUCTION

The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. (Proverbs 4:18-19)

Those of us who live in the developed world in the 21st Century find ourselves in a massive worldview war and the stakes are extremely high. It is a war of ideas, and, as one thinker put it, “Ideas have consequences.” That should be an obvious truism, even an understatement. As Jesus said, “Ye shall know the teachers by their fruits,” or by the consequences of their ideas. The consequences of the post-Christian ideas in our world have been extremely destructive. Secularism or naturalistic materialism as a worldview is the dry rot of a civilization. The ideas of the wicked are deceptive and absent of light—and all who follow their ideas will inevitably stumble when they attempt to live out those ideas. Conversely, the path of the just becomes more plain, because the light of God’s truth shines upon them. Because powerful governments control almost every university, secondary, and primary educational institution today, those who hold to a Christian

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worldview are very much in the minority. At least 99% of universities (private and public) in this country are financed and controlled by the Federal and State Governments through student loan programs and other financing. About 95% of the secondary and primary schools are financed by governments. The fear of God and a Christian worldview are expressly banned from these schools by federal mandate. We are heavily outnumbered in this worldview conflict.

A worldview is a network or web of presuppositions by which we interpret data, organize facts, and assess all other propositions. All worldviews are not equally true. Or, to put it another way, the worldview claiming “There is no God” and that worldview which states “There is a God” cannot both be true. One worldview is better than the others, because it is true and the others are not. That truthful worldview, therefore, is the only worldview which can provide the preconditions for intelligibility and a right interpretation of the universe. Only the Christian worldview provides these preconditions because it is based on God’s truth, and this basic structure of thought maintains an internal coherence and a rational explanation for man’s thinking and life. All other worldviews are inherently destructive, especially so when those who adhere to them are self-consistent and live by the worldviews they profess.

The presuppositions that make up a worldview ask fundamental questions, such as: What is real? Does God exist? What is right and wrong? What is truth? What is man’s essential value or purpose? What is man’s essential problem? We will boil a worldview down to five basic questions:

1. What is true, and how do we know it is true? This is usually referred to as epistemology.
2. What is real? This is usually referred to as metaphysics.



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is a network
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we interpret
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3. What is right and wrong? This is usually referred to as ethics.
4. What is man's basic problem?
5. How is man saved from this problem?

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (Colossians 2:8 NKJV)

The world has bamboozled Christians into thinking that education is neutral, and all university studies in history, science, philosophy, psychology, and literature a purely unbiased perspective. This is the narrative that has robbed unwary Christians of their faith generation after generation. While these extremely biased philosophers loudly claim they have come to the subject without bias, they shame Christians for holding to their bias in the class. This is nothing less than a sophisticated con game played at the highest levels of academia. In this way, each generation of young people is cheated through worldly philosophies, according to the basic principles of the world (false worldviews).

For this reason, all Christian students must be very aware of the game that is played and the worldview conflicts that rage about them in education, media, business, and politics. If they intend to interact with this world's institutions, they must obtain a thorough grasp on their own worldview. As well, they should have a working knowledge of every major competing worldview out there, and why they are wrong. They must be equipped to "pull down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Worldviews may be hard to detect on the surface. Merely surveying the floors and the floor coverings of buildings will not discover the concrete foundation and footers that lie under the surface. A quick survey of a newscast, a chemistry textbook, a documentary film, or a fiction novel won't immediately reveal the worldview presuppositions that lie underneath the information

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conveyed. It takes a healthy degree of worldview savvy, a self-consciousness of one's own worldview, a thoughtful consideration of the text, a realization of the author's emphases or lack of emphases, and an understanding of the heart and life of the author (or producer) to get at the heart of the worldview. Yet, when Christians absorb themselves in the zeitgeist contained in media and educational resources without discernment for years on end, they will find themselves thoroughly committed to the wrong worldview, especially if they have not been well-disciplined in a Christian world and life view.

PART 1

WHAT IS TRUE?

CHAPTER 1

EPISTEMOLOGY: WHAT IS TRUTH?

**For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.
(Psalm 36:9)**

Where would we be without light? As anybody who has ever walked in darkness could testify, absence of light makes it impossible to see anything. There would be no definition to any of the surrounding reality. Submerged in pitch darkness, all definition to our surroundings is lost. We could not describe what is in front of us, nor could we ever find our way. Where are we and where are we going? Neither of these questions can be answered without light. How hopeless and aimless is the case of those who have no light! But, thanks be to God, it is by His light that we see light. There is no other possibility for light than with God. For “[He] is light, and in Him is there no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

Truth works like light. When there is no light in the room, you cannot see reality for how it really is. Everything looks dark, and there are no colors and shapes for you to see. If you were to charge into the room, you would bump into things and, no doubt, fall down on the floor. Without a light on the

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situation, there is no way of knowing what reality looks like. Truth describes reality accurately, so that you can walk without falling down.

At the trial of Jesus, Pilate asked the question, “What is truth?” The Roman procurator didn’t realize that Truth was standing right in front of him. Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Truth, therefore, must be personal. Truth is the personal revelation of God to man. To know God in truth is to know that which is true, and this knowledge comes through Jesus Christ, His Son.

What is truth? The question is vitally important to humanity—perhaps it is the most important question of all. What is true? Our very life, our future, and our eternal condition hangs on the right answer to this question.

Truth is the right way to consider or think about something as opposed to the wrong way. If a friend told you that the ice on a lake was two feet thick and sufficient to hold your weight, you would be more likely to venture on to the ice. But, if the ice turned out to be three inches thick, the consequence of you believing and acting upon that lie could be catastrophic. The truth in the case of Jesus’ trial was that He was innocent of any charges that might require the death penalty. Pilate surrendered his interest in the truth by asking the question as he buckled to political pressure. Later we discover that the Roman governor committed suicide. Wrong understandings of the world will result in bad actions and effects.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

People lie. That’s a fundamental proposition, and any contradiction to that proposition would itself constitute a most radical deception. The world is filled with liars, and they cause a great deal of harm. To lie about the thickness of the ice on a lake brings about devastating consequences for the person who ventures onto the ice and falls through. Jesus called the devil “the father of

lies,” and this is a fundamental reality in a Christian worldview. The devil is not to be trusted, and humans are not to be trusted much either. There are many traps, snares, deceptions, false systems of religion, and misleading notions in this world. There are a great many wizards in this world that “peep and mutter.” So, you have to be on your guard.

Darkness is the absence of light, and lies are the absence of truth. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 John 1:6). So, to believe lies is to walk in darkness, and the result of walking in darkness is to go the wrong way and to fall.

To respond to this certain fact of the devil’s deceptiveness with paranoia, total skepticism, or perpetual cynicism about every proposition would be to fall into another snare of the devil. The only hope for knowing truth with certainty is to first know and believe that God has revealed truth to us. The only proper and rational response to the wizards that peep and mutter is to seek God; or in the words of Isaiah 8:20: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”



*Only God
can provide
sufficient
light for right
knowledge,
for life, and
for the right
way to walk.*

I cannot overstate this point. Only God can provide sufficient light for right knowledge, for life, and for the right way to walk. We are entirely, perpetually dependent upon God’s revelation of truth to know anything for certain, to walk the right way, to identify the right destination, and to live eternally.

The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. (Proverbs 4:19)

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. (Isaiah 42:16)

KNOWLEDGE

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Unlike the animals, man was created with the capacity to know God and to know himself, and to know the rest of God's creation.

There are differences, however, between our knowing and God's knowing. Here are a few of these differences:

1. God knows everything, and we do not. We know a little bit about the atom, but God knows everything about the atom. We can see some of the stars in the heavens, but God can see all of them, all at once. God knows us better than we know ourselves—infinately so.

2. God knows how everything relates to everything else, and we do not. We can see how one thing relates to another thing or a few other things, but that's about it. Our knowledge is the same as God's knowledge, only in the sense that we can see these limited connections as God sees them. But we cannot see how everything connects to everything else in the universe.

3. God knows what will happen in the future, and we do not. His knowledge of the future is based in His determination of the future.

4. God does not increase in His knowledge. He already knows everything. We increase our knowledge incrementally every day. We are reliant upon our senses to obtain data and learn more about God's universe, while God does not rely on any means to obtain new information.

5. God holds the position of ultimate honor and majesty in that He knows everything. The more we know, the more we realize we do not know. Therefore, the more we learn of true knowledge, the more we are humbled and realize that we do not take the place of the highest honor.

6. God does not forget anything, whereas we quickly forget quite a few

things we have learned along the way. Now, it is true that God does not remember our sins, in the sense that He associates those sins with us. Because they have been cast away from us, they are no longer associated with us in His mind. Our sins have been put upon His Son, and then put to death at the cross.

7. God is the source of all knowledge, and we are not. He is the ultimate authority in determining what is true and what is false. We must test what we think we know to be true by some authority. We might refer to an encyclopedia, or to an expert, or to scientific data in order to establish the truthfulness of what we think we know. Because God Himself determines truth, there is no authority to which He would refer to verify what He knows to be true. We are, therefore, always dependent upon God's knowledge for our own knowledge. We are dependent on His light to see light.

8. While God's knowledge is infinite and comprehensive, the Christian's knowledge will be sufficient knowledge for faith and life. Our knowledge of a thing is not absolutely precise or accurate, but the knowledge of it is sufficient for our salvation and life in God. We can know with sufficient accuracy. We can know enough to live life to the highest purpose for which God has created us. We must believe that what God chooses to reveal to us will be sufficient for us. He is good, all wise, and desirous of a relationship with us. Therefore, He will communicate to us the things we need to know for this life.

9. Our knowledge is a mixture of truth and error. Sometimes the puzzle pieces don't fit together very well, and so we lack coherence in our system of knowledge. God's knowledge is perfect, and He maintains a perfect coherence of all there is to know.

10. God's creation and providence (in the natural world and in history) are the workings out of what He planned in His mind. As such, He is the ultimate Creator, bringing something out of nothing, according to His own creativity. Human philosophers, psychologists, artists, and scientists are more discoverers than creators. They do not add to the available knowledge in the universe, but only think God's thoughts after Him (to the extent that they think rationally and produce anything that is good).

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN OUR KNOWING AND GOD'S KNOWING

Now, there are also similarities between our knowing and God's knowing.

1. The source of our knowing is the mind of God, and the same is true of God.
2. We can make distinctions as God makes distinctions between that which is true and that which is false, that which is a dog and that which is a cat. We may have a hard time distinguishing between two things that look very much alike, but that is because we are limited in the number of distinctions we can make.
3. We can also note the same reference points of one thing to another. For example, you know that your mother gave birth to you on a certain day, and God knows the same thing about you.

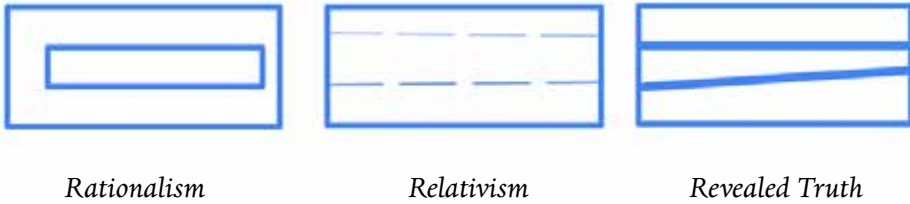
Given this vast difference between God's knowing and our knowing, now we can see why the Apostle Paul would exclaim this doxology!

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

(Romans 11:33-36)

THREE VIEWS OF KNOWLEDGE

There are three different views of knowledge as demonstrated by the following three illustrations:



The first chart demonstrates a rationalist form of knowledge. The box represents the screen of our own minds, and the box within the box is what a person thinks he knows about truth and reality. According to this view of knowledge, everything is supposed to be explained and clearly understood. Those who hold to this form of knowledge think that they know everything, and they can explain everything in a logical manner. There are no mysteries in their foundational understanding of reality, of human nature, of God, and of God's works. Various cults and humanist worldviews will attempt to hold this view. Of course, the problem with this view of knowledge is that we cannot possibly know everything about everything.

The second chart illustrates a completely relativist form of knowledge. The dashed lines mean that we cannot know anything for certain. There is no coherence, and there may be contradictions in this view of knowledge. What we think we know cannot be known for sure to be true. Therefore, this chart represents the abandonment of any real knowledge. Relativism gives up on the possibility of knowing anything. It is irrational and insane—and this is where most of the world lies in the 21st Century.

Then, the third chart represents a proper view of real knowledge, based on revealed truth. What God has shown us within the screen of our minds is certainly true. While we do not know what the lines look like outside of the screen, we are certain of the things God has revealed to us within the screen. We cannot see where the lines meet. We believe that God's knowledge is coherent and non-contradictory. But we cannot fully explain reality as God understands it. There is much about the universe that nobody can explain.

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Worldly philosophers are stumped as well. Nobody can explain how the world works. How does the whole world run without falling into chaos? How does man retain moral responsibility in a world of chance, or a world that is determined to run a certain way? These are impossible questions to answer. The world cannot answer them, but we can. We explain impossibilities with incomprehensibilities, which only God has figured out. This third chart best comports with Deuteronomy 29:29:

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

HOW ONE'S VIEW OF REALITY AFFECTS ONE'S VIEW OF TRUTH

Every person in the world holds to some worldview or some collection of basic beliefs concerning God, man, man's problem, right and wrong, salvation, and the afterlife. This worldview functions like glasses, through which a person views the world. These glasses render either a true or false interpretation of reality. For the purpose of illustration, suppose one were to look at the backyard through pink lenses. The grass would appear pink. If another were to view the backyard through orange lenses, the grass would appear to him as orange. They may get on to arguing about the color of the grass. What both parties may fail to realize is that their interpretation was colored by the glasses through which they took in the data.

The more important question to be discussed is this: which pair of glasses more accurately interprets reality? What's the right worldview and how would you know? Most people haven't really thought much about their "glasses" through which they interpret the world. They rarely question their baseline beliefs. They just assume they have it right. Solid Christian apologetics will provide good tests by which to determine a good or bad worldview. Faithful Christian evangelists will question the shaky foundations to which the

unbeliever holds in his false views about God, himself, sin, and judgment. The right worldview can only be formed on the certain truths of divine revelation. There is no other possibility for a rock-solid foundation. This is the only possibility for coherent and self-consistent basis for human thought. God knows all things, and this alone is the basis for determining what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong with absolute certainty.

Nevertheless, it would be good and honest, from the outset, to lay out the basic points of the Christian worldview. Here it is in short order:

1. God exists, and He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His attributes (including omniscience) (Heb. 11:6; 1 John 3:20).
2. God created us with the capacity to know the things He has for us to know (Eph. 4:24).
3. God has graciously revealed His truth to us (Deut. 29:29).
4. God's truth comes with the utmost authority, and we are bound to believe it (Deut. 4:2; Matt. 5:17-19).
5. God reveals His truth to us by special revelation (orally or in writing), and by natural revelation. He intended us to live with special revelation as a guide to right knowing (Ps. 19:1-14).
6. God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18).
7. God is sovereign and all powerful, and able to preserve His Word of truth through all generations (1 Pet. 1:25).

Before we can know anything, these are the things which must be believed. We cannot get on with knowing certain truths, until we have accepted the metaphysical facts that God exists, that God is all sovereign and all powerful, and that He is Himself all knowing. If God was not sovereign and all powerful, how could we be sure He would preserve His Word once revealed to man? If God was not all-knowing, how could we trust His revelation with an absolute certainty?

On the other hand, if God did not reveal His truth to man, then how could we know that He exists? He communicates His existence, power, and

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His glory to man through revelation.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high... (Hebrews 1:1-3)

AUTHORITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Suppose someone told you there were 4,123,456,789,123 ants in Africa at this moment. How would you know this, or, more specifically, how would you know this to be true? How could you claim this knowledge? First, you could not claim to know this fact if it were untrue. If there were more or less ants in Africa than that number, you would have believed a lie. To believe a lie is not to know something. So, the statement would have to be true if you were to claim this as something you know. Then also, there must be some evidence of the truth of the statement. If there was no evidence or basis for the statement, believing the person who said it does not constitute true knowledge. If the person who made the statement was just making up the number on the spot, that statement contributes nothing to your knowing. For a statement to be true and to be known, there must be some reason to believe it. That's why true knowledge has to be justified, true, and believed by the person who claims to know it.

A justified reason for the belief could be an authority who did sufficient research. Or perhaps, some scientist came up with an ant-counting device able to count all the ants on the earth from outer space. Even so, you would still have to trust the expert or the technology producing the count.

Not all authorities are equally trustworthy. These days, people trust scientists mostly, but they still don't know the degree to which the scientists

are trustworthy. Here are some of the problems that call into question the trustworthiness of scientists and other people who claim to know things:

- People lie.
- Demons lie to people.
- Scientific equipment is not always very precise. Measurement equipment can break.
- Knowledge is usually communicated, and people make mistakes when they communicate either through oral or written testimony.
- Every fact to be known depends on the reliability of other assumptions believed to be known, thus, reducing the reliability of each additional fact, given the limited reliability of the assumptions.
- The human brain is limited in its capacity.
- People forget things, and the facts become twisted over time. This applies to historians reporting on something that happened and scientists who report on their experiments. Can you trust what people tell you, or what is contained in books? The trustworthiness of any person is variable. That means there is a possibility a person is lying to you. There is a possibility that someone has been deceived, or that person has failed to verify the thing he claims to believe, the thing he is communicating to you.

We usually believe people because we are convinced they are trustworthy, or that they are an authority. Teachers are authoritative because they have studied a subject more than others, including their own students. Scientists become authorities on certain subjects (like cancer or rocket boosters), because they have studied in these areas for a long time.

Now, it is difficult to ascertain the level of trustworthiness of any particular person, textbook, or authoritative source. Often, we trust educated people with doctorate degrees because they have been certified by an institution. But who are these people running the institutions? What if the entire institution is deceived by the devil? What if the entire system is fooling millions of people

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in a similar manner as the tailors and their propaganda program beguiled the Emperor and his kingdom with their “new clothes?”

Because it is impossible to know the level of trustworthiness of every person, every fact, and every textbook, we are left with a great deal of uncertainty in human knowledge. This is the biggest problem. If you don’t know the trustworthiness of a person, how much trust can you place in them? Thankfully, when it comes to scientific inquiry, you can determine probability by repeating an experiment over time. This provides a little bit of understanding as to the probability that a cause-effect relationship might be true and reproducible. However, science is a very limited field of knowledge. The modern world tries to use science to determine the past (evolution), and the future (global warming), the nature of man (psychology), and the existence of God, but these matters are far beyond the capabilities of the field of science.

Do we know anything for sure? Any honest person would admit that you cannot know anything for sure, unless you are omniscient or you hear from one who is omniscient. But to be omniscient, one would have to have collected all the data. One must know about all reality. One must be aware of what everything is made out of, every force in the universe, and every non-material concept that is knowable. That would mean that a person would have to be omnipresent to know everything that is happening right now.

One would have to be eternal to know what has happened in the past. And, one must be in total control of the future, in order to know every contingency, and every possible thing that could happen in the future. That’s a tall order for a human. We are not omniscient, omnipresent, and sovereign over all things. Our limitations prevent us from knowing anything for certain, in and of ourselves.

Philosophy is supposed to be the “love of knowledge.” But human philosophy

turns out to be a quest for knowledge that always ends in doubt and uncertainty. This was true of the Greeks. And it is true of modern post-Christian philosophers like René Descartes and John Dewey. Without God, man always ends up in doubt.

ULTIMATE AUTHORITY—ULTIMATE TRUSTWORTHINESS

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

(John 12:46-50)

How would you define an ultimate authority? A university professor takes points off an exam when the student doesn't get the right answer as presented in the class. A much more ultimate standard for authority is set by these words from the Lord in John 12. What earthly authority could ever claim the very words he spoke would be the basis by which his hearers would be judged in the final assize at the end of the world? There can be no higher authority than that. Christ spoke only and ever on the authority of God the Father, and He delivered not one word more than that which the Father would have Him speak.



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He is the very source of all reality and all true knowledge. He determines what is right and wrong. Because He is truth and speaks as the ultimate authority, He is ultimately trustworthy. If God is God, and God exists, to doubt God is not to believe that God is God and that God exists. In other words, one cannot claim to believe in God and then fail to believe what God reveals. That would be not to believe in God.

All other sources of information will be doubtful or relatively untrustworthy, calling for varying levels of doubt. Only God is ultimately trustworthy, and completely unworthy of any distrust. Doubting God must be the most fundamental sin against God and against any and all true knowledge. Doubting God is insanity. Any person who would not doubt himself or doubt every other person in the world before doubting God has given way to irrational pride. As the Apostle Paul states it, "Let God be true and every man a liar!" (Rom. 3:4). The infinite chasm between the finite, mortal, and fallible mind of man and the omniscient mind of God would absolutely and always demand self-doubt over doubting God.

**God is not a man, that he should lie;
Neither the son of man, that he should repent:
Hath he said, and shall he not do it?
Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? (Numbers 23:19)**

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. (Hebrews 6:13-18)

This doctrine offers us great comfort, primarily because our hope rests in the promises of God. We hang our very souls upon God's promises of forgiveness of sin and an eternal inheritance. But this hope is only possible because of two things: (1) the immutability of God's counsel or Word, and (2) the oath He takes by Himself.

When a notary seals an official document such as a will, the heir has the assurance that he will receive the inheritance. The signatories may have even taken an oath in the presence of witnesses to confirm the truthfulness of the document. For our assurance, however, God seals the document with His own name, a reputation of ultimate trustworthiness based upon His own essential truthfulness; and then confirms it with an oath that cannot be broken. These attestations render a great deal of confidence and an unbreakable hope to those who depend upon contractual promises.

IN CONTRAST WITH OTHER WORLDVIEWS

To assist with a better understanding of one's own worldview, there is some value to drawing contrasts with other worldviews. Every worldview or religion maintains some view of knowledge—and the Christian view is superior to all others. That must be assumed within the framework of this worldview; if God is the source of truth and if others contradict the most basic truths presented in divine revelation, they must be wrong. In fact, we go so far as to say that all other worldviews or religious perspectives are foolish, deceptive, and devilish. These are the wizards that peep and mutter, and there is no light in them (Is. 8:19).

RANDOM OR HIGHLY INSUFFICIENT THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

Epistemology is the study of knowing. What is the standard or basis for determining what is true? Most people have never thought about thinking, or

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developed a theory about knowing. Generally, people are quite opinionated about certain things, and they believe they know a particular thing is true without thinking much about the basis for that knowledge. They take their own existence for granted. They assume that stealing is wrong, especially if somebody robs their house. They consider themselves to be nice people. They may or may not believe in a god or gods, but if a god exists, they are pretty sure of one thing—the gods are happy with them. Some believe there is no god. They may think of themselves as cosmic dust floating around a universe of pure chance. They may believe that man appeared on the earth by evolutionary processes. They may believe government is responsible for saving man from his troubles. They think they know all these things, because an expert told them that was the case. They might assume that a majority of scientists or experts agree on the matter. They believe their university teachers. They believe media pundits.


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Suppose that 100,000 smart people (university professors or scientists) told you that you do not exist. That's a pretty fundamental proposition. It cannot be proven one way or the other, in any ultimate sense, either by science or by observation. The question to ask then is this: How do these smart people know this to be the case? Who said they were smart people? Who gave them their college degrees? Are they in the position to know these things about a very ultimate question relating to life?

When examining the foundations in the edifice of knowledge, we must insist on examining the basis for knowing. We must force the question: How do you know this is true? If an unbeliever were to be honest, he would have to admit that he has no basis for knowing, and he has no desire to pursue the true basis of knowing. He always reverts to irrationality over against seeking out a reasonable basis for knowledge. He insists upon suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

SCIENCE

Most unbelievers in Western society point to science as the basis for their knowing. However, the definition of science has become increasingly slippery, and once again, dishonesty governs the business of science these days. Science cannot provide any absolutely sure knowledge with 100.00% certainty. Science can describe something observed, and distinguish one thing from another. Science concludes cause-and-effect relationships at certain probabilities. But science is totally incapable of determining the origin of the universe, the origin of the fundamental laws of nature, the extreme fine-tuning of the universe, the origin of consciousness, and the existence of moral, rational, and aesthetic objective laws. Science cannot determine man's worth in the universe, man's purpose, man's existence, or the existence of anything within the universe, or the existence of God. These are ultimate questions.

Here is another important maxim. The more fundamental the question to be answered in the quest for human knowledge, the more critical is the need for certainty. That is because the edifice of human knowledge is built up on the fundamental propositions. Science may conclude with 99% probability that gravity exists (by dropping an object 100 times), but science cannot conclude with 99% probability that God exists or doesn't exist. Science cannot draw conclusions concerning the rightness or wrongness in ethics, with any probability. Science gives no absolutes and no universal laws with absolute certainty. Thus, without a foundation for knowledge, science is no good for producing a system of knowledge.

With science then, you might be pretty sure of a window existing in the edifice of knowledge. But you have no assurance whatsoever concerning the fundamental propositions that lie at the foundation of knowing.

THE PHILOSOPHERS

Whether it be with the Zoroastrians, ancient Greek philosophers, or the post-Christian philosophers of the 17th to the 20th Centuries, man has attempted

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the search for a basis for truth using his own reason or his own empirical study of the world. Throughout human history, there were effectively two “heroic” attempts to build a system of knowledge on the foundation of human reason—that of the pre-Christian world of the Greeks, and the post-Christian world of Western apostates.

Rationalists like René Descartes were hoping human reason could determine some ultimate truth. Empiricists like John Locke or David Hume relied on the senses to determine some true knowledge. And, the subjectivists look for meaning and knowledge within themselves.

In all cases, the finite mind of man was supposed to be the source of this knowledge. Humanist philosophers set out to discover ultimate truths, but because these smart people could not know everything about the world, they could not come upon foundational truths. Descartes’s rationalistic attempt to find an idea that was “clear and distinct” was a failure, eventually turning into Leibniz’s bizarre speculations. Locke’s empiricism ended in David Hume’s skepticism.

Twentieth Century philosophy gave up on identifying ultimate truths. Instead, Nietzsche, Dewey, and Sartre settled on identifying ideas that were found to be useful, pragmatic, or problem-solving. They all capitulated to Nietzsche’s nihilism—the idea that the world is chaos and not understandable, ultimate truths are unknowable, and meaning or purpose of life is sheer nonsense.

Man-derived philosophy always oscillated between rationalism and irrationalism, settling into irrationalism at the end. Rationalism was the optimistic position that the human mind could judge between truth and falsehood. Irrationalism would then concede that human reason was insufficient to the task, and surrender the possibility of knowing anything for certain.

Human philosophers were entirely incapable of achieving any consensus or agreement on basic epistemological principles relating to human knowledge. There is no agreement among the smartest unbelievers in the world on

determining the truthfulness of any basic proposition. Thus, no foundation for knowledge and education can be had among the humanist philosophers and institutions that run our world today. So much for philosophy.

RELATIVISM—“WHAT’S TRUE FOR YOU”

Doubt and uncertainty is the position of the unbeliever. He prefers not to be sure about anything rather than to be sure that there is a God to whom he is morally accountable. He would rather doubt his own existence and pretend ignorance of every single thing there is to know rather than to face God.

This doubt usually reverts to the position of relativism. This is the rejection of all absolutes, all certainty, all truth, and all knowledge. However, the relativist position is only a pretense and a ruse. For the relativist is very sure of his doctrine of relativism to the point that he will admit to being a relativist, and argue for it. He both states that there is no truth, and advocates vociferously for the truth that there is no absolute truth. But then, he is always inconsistent to his position as a relativist. When somebody steals his car, he is very sure, at that moment, that it is wrong to steal.

The relativist expresses less and less interest in claiming to know anything, or identifying some basis for knowing this or that. What he thought was true for one moment, may not be true the next. So why bother taking the time to give a rational explanation for what he knows or knew a minute ago? This verges on insanity. The relativist is only one step away from a mental institute, or he may already be there. This psychological pattern is outlined in Romans 1:28-29.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness... (Romans 1:28-29)

REVELATION BY DEMONS AND GURUS

Some world religions are based on teachings from human gurus, enlightened persons, or spiritual revelations from a spirit or god in a pantheon of gods. The Buddha's writings and the Hindu Bhagavad Gita fall into this category. Neither religion claims the revelations to come from the God of gods, or the Source of all knowledge and truth. Hinduism is a polytheistic religion, and Buddhism claims no personal god, or ultimate God as the source of all truth. Either the propositions shared in these writings come from the mind of man or the mind of a demon/spirit/god. None of these sources are omniscient. The authority claim for these writings is a man, who says he was enlightened. One thing we know, and that is that he was not enlightened by God, the ultimate and only Source of truth and knowledge. Thus, the authority claim is vacuous. This is a non-authority, and not worthy to be trusted. Men lie. Demons are not to be trusted. As long as multiple gods are configured, there is no reason to believe one god over another. Multiple gods means multiple contradictions, multiple opinions—none of which even claim ultimate authority and omniscience concerning all there is to know.

Both the Buddhist and Hindu religions claim to be non-dogmatic and highly synthesized. People are drawn to these religions because they claim not to be dogmatic about this proposition or that proposition. "There are many truths, or many ways to finding truth," the gurus tell us. They surrender authority by appearing to be open minded, all the while still claiming their position to be true. These religions look for substantiation by an inner experience or a subjective experience that feels like "peace." If the method yields a gratifying experience, they assume that the underlying message must be right. The same thing could be said though, for any superficial experience that feels good, to include the drug culture, certain sexual experiences, and hypnosis. Does a good superficial effect or a good feeling render a value judgment concerning the action or the thinking behind the action? Such arguments assume that whatever feels good must be ethically right, or must be based in true propositions. Are highly subjective feelings a good judge of truth? These superficial experiences

that feel good in the moment may yield an evil or painful effect later on, as in the case of hangovers. Moreover, the experience may have almost nothing to do with the ideology or philosophy that is said to have been associated with it.

Worldviews on Truth Authorities and Epistemology

Religion/ Worldview	Truth Authority/ Epistemology	Why They Are Wrong	What We Believe
Materialism/ Naturalism	Truth and knowledge are meaningless concepts. Propositions are immaterial.	To defend this position by the use of ideas and propositions, which this worldview by definition rejects as meaningless in a purely material world, is a fundamental contradiction of the highest order.	Truth and knowledge are meaningful concepts because God renders them meaning. God substantiates both concepts in His Word (Gen. 2:9, 17; John 17:17; Col. 3:10).
Humanism	Individual man, democracy, or politicians are the source of truth.	These are competing sources for truth. All humans are mortal and fall short of omniscience. Humans and social units disagree with each other. Knowledge of the universe requires knowledge of its parts. And knowledge of one part of the universe is informed by knowledge of another part of the universe. There is no possibility of obtaining certainty by this truth authority.	God's Word is the source of truth—and the only possibility for certainty (John 17:17).
Scientism	Empirical data, observed and interpreted by smart scientists, is the source of truth.	Scientists must apply a presupposed worldview when interpreting scientific data. Science is not equipped to provide certainty or any information about ultimate truths concerning reality, ethics, laws of logic, etc.	Man is often mistaken and easily deceived. His own heart is “deceitful above all things” (Jer. 17:9). He is self-deceived. He is known to suppress what truth he knows in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). When confronting the conclusions drawn by witch doctors or scientists, we are instructed to go to the law and the testimony to verify. If the conclusions are not according to the law and the testimony, it is because there is no light in them (Is. 8:20).

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Hinduism	Human seers who pick up on cosmic sounds reveal the vedas. Truth is equated to reality. The vedas are not sourced in God.	Vedas still come in propositions, words, and human language. The very notion that truth is reality, and reality is unchanging, is itself a proposition (an attempt to communicate a truth about truth and reality). Moreover, people don't live this way, equating truth to reality. All people, including Hindus, study reality and make truth claims about reality and act upon these truth claims.	The Bible distinguishes reality from truth—the reality of God from His truth. Scriptures also source our truth in God, and our ultimate knowledge of truth in God's revelation to man. Demons are very eager to convey impressions and ideas to men, such that the recipients perceive it to come from a spiritual, non-material, non-divine cosmic origin (2 Cor. 11:3, 4; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; John 8:44).
Buddhism	The Buddha, with his perception of reality as an enlightened person, perceives and interprets the world like a scientist. Truth is seen as the nature of reality—impermanent, changing, and verified by personal experience.	The Buddha himself would admit to have increased in learning, but this means that this mortal, finite human was not at any point omniscient—to obtain a comprehensive knowledge of all things about the universe. The Buddha did not know the person who poisoned him to death. Because all truth is impermanent according to this view, there can be no certain knowledge at all. All observations will still be filtered by a pre-conceived worldview obtained from somewhere other than God (the omniscient).	Only God is omniscient. Only in God's light will we see any light at all (Ps. 36:9). The Holy Spirit enlightens our minds to better understand God's truth revealed in His Word.
Islam	The Quran revealed to Mohammed is the source of truth. God's original revelation in the Old and New Testaments was garbled over time by interpolations and man-sourced additions, and God was unable and/or not willing to maintain adequate accuracy or precision for any or all peoples.	This calls into question the current copies of what is purported to be divine revelation as well. How might man have gummed up the original revelation, given that God is unwilling or unable to preserve his revelation over time? What confidence might we claim that the Scriptures would be preserved between AD 600 and the present, if God was incapable or unwilling to preserve the Scriptures between 1440 BC and AD 600?	God is able to preserve His revelation and expects subsequent generations to have it available, to read it, and to pass it on to their children (Deut. 6:6-9; 29:29; Ps. 12:6, 7; Is. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16; 24:35).