

Discerning our Culture; engaging our Culture

Jay Wegter, Teacher

Eight Worldview Questions for gaining Biblical Discernment of our Culture:

Q. 1 – Why is cosmology so important to our understanding of reality? There are but two cosmologies. Either this is an open universe created, upheld, owned, and acted upon by our transcendent God, OR this is a closed universe and all reality is contained within it (including the divine). In **Acts 17**, Paul establishes that God’s relation to the creation (cosmology) is prime, ultimate, bedrock reality.

God’s relation to the creation (cosmology) determines all other questions.

God is: Creator, Owner, Law-giver, Definer, Upholder, Redeemer, and Judge. Q. How do we relate to God who lives outside of time, and yet is sovereign over all, yet allows our decisions to have lasting significance? Our knowledge depends upon His self-revealed knowledge.

Since our knowledge depends upon God’s knowledge, knowledge is ethical in nature. Knowing is predicated upon God’s relationship to the world (central to cosmology). All things from plants to planets serve God by revealing God (*John Frame*). When the academy attributes order, uniformity, predictability, rationality, laws, intelligence, and logic to a chaotic explosion (a ‘big bang’)—how is this investigative science? It isn’t science. The psalmist states: “You established the earth, and it stands. They stand this day according to Your ordinances, for all things are Your servants” (Ps 119:90-91).

Either we bow the knee to Christ (LOGOS) and affirm the truth of what God says, or we oppose Him and attempt to ‘create’ a world of our own making. The unbeliever cannot make sense of things by means of the illusory world of his imagining. **All of God’s facts in the world are ‘servant facts’.** Unsaved men will answer for how they handled these facts—even ‘two plus two’ will condemn the unbeliever on judgment day, for facts glorify God. The unbeliever distorts the meaning of facts.

Our knowledge depends upon God’s knowledge. God commands faith in His infallible Word. Faith reflects God’s reasoning. To know the truth with certainty, we must ‘think God’s thoughts after Him’—bring our mind under His mind (Ps 36:9; Heb 6:1-3). All unbelief is defiance of God’s sovereign ownership—unbelief reveals a faith commitment to autonomy—which is war upon the truth that man is the image of God. “. . . a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2a-3).

Either prime reality is *personal* (Almighty God), or prime reality is *impersonal* (the worldview of philosophic naturalism, materialism). Thus, there are really only two worldviews (two ways of viewing our existence): either God is ultimate, or chance is ultimate. If chance is ultimate then man is utterly determined by nature and really has no moral free agency (or freedom of will). If chance is ultimate then morals, ethics, meaning, dignity, good, evil, and love are all illusions.

Q. 2 -- What does Scripture tell us about the corruption of human reason by the Lie?

Romans 1:18-23 is the Scriptural record of the universal corruption of human reason. This Romans passage documents man’s intellectual war upon the moral image of God. When man broke away from God ethically, he also broke away *intellectually*. Man’s *intellectual* rebellion is expressed in attempt to interpret everything in which he comes into contact without reference to God (Rom 1:18).

The enthronement of reason: The scientific revolution of the 17th century laid the foundation for a worldview that did not depend on Christian assumptions and categories. Further, even though Bacon was an empiricist and Descartes a rationalist, both believed that the power of human reason, rightly employed, rendered authority obsolete.

Q. 3 -- How has the Lie affected public education? Once religion became ‘irrelevant’ the academy was turned over to the secularists. The Two-level view of truth: Theistic worldview became privatized when Christians sought ‘peace’ with cultural relativism. Since the two are mutually exclusive, theism was put into the ‘upper story’ of the non-cognitive—and thus seen as ‘value’, and not as fact. In the two-level view of knowledge, the upper story is irrational and the lower story is considered rational.

Our public universities are systematically indoctrinating students with the lies inherent in pantheistic cosmology or ‘One-ist’ cosmology (in which the cosmos is *absolutized*). In the ‘One-ist’ view, *the universe is self-originating, self-sustaining, self-defined; but meaningless. The universe contains everything that exists* (Eph 4:17-19).

Q. 4 – According to Romans one, how does the Lie affect our worship and our vision of sexuality? Idolatry is expressed in a three-fold way. Each area of rebellion precedes the next: Cosmology>>Spirituality>>Sexuality (conceptually>>spiritually>>behaviourally).

God’s righteous response to man’s rebellion is *wrath revealed from heaven*. Man’s wickedness is expressed in *three exchanges* (vv. 23, 25, 26). God’s wrath is expressed in *three ‘givings over’* (vv. 24, 26, 28). Romans one exposes the denial of the transcendence of God. Paul’s focused language in Romans one (articular nouns) narrows the religious options in the world to only two possibilities: One either serves the Truth (Biblical worldview/God transcendent) or the Lie (the cosmology of ‘one-ism’).

Homosexuality is an over-turning of God’s created order (Rom 1:25). War upon the distinction between male and female (exchange of truth = exchange of function) is ultimately war against God who is Maker of distinctions. Homosexuality follows the worship of the creation everywhere. Many universities are teaching ‘One-ist’ cosmology and are consequently advocates of homosexuality (Rom 1:25). Pagan cosmology underlies the advocacy of homosexuality in education, media, government, and the arts.

Q. 5 – How does the Lie shape a new vision for structuring society?

In contrast to the worldview of “one-ism,” the “Creator-creature” distinction of biblical worldview explains so much of the Christian faith, and thus the very structure of reality. Created distinctions belong to God’s design or ‘blueprint’ for creation. They are:

HETEREO-COSMOLOGY (“two-ness”): Celebrates the Creator-creature distinction.

HETERO-SPIRITUALITY (“two-ness”): Celebrates the transcendence of God and makes intimacy possible. The creation gives praise, but does not receive praise.

HETERO-SEXUALITY (“two-ness”): Symbolizes the relation of God and the world. It is a love relationship of union with a difference.

“One-ist” spirituality seeks to erase the distinctions between God and man, between man and animal, and between man and woman. Romans one tells us that overturning the created order will result in unnatural ways of living and relating (vv. 24-27). **What is behind today’s moral revolution?** The breaking down of male and female gender is central to the whole new vision for society—which seeks a new moral order with new laws and ethics. “One-ist” cosmology is being used to justify this massive redefinition driving the moral revolution.

We need Paul’s analysis of the world because it is into this world today that we must speak the gospel. In Romans one, Paul addresses three categories: *truth (theology)*; *worship (spirituality)*; and *behavior (sexuality)*. Homosexuality follows the worship of the creation (the ‘One-ist’ worldview). HOMO-THEOLOGY nature and the divine are identified with each other (no distinction—‘one-ist’). HOMO-SPIRITUALITY worships nature, humanity, and self. HOMOSEXUALITY preferred sexual expression of pagan worldview (consequence of ‘one-ism’).

Q. 6 – Why does the Lie ‘break the dam of restraint’ and unleash sexual debauchery in a culture? Because we live in a selfish fallen world, erroneous worldviews appeal to the desires of the flesh. Ephesians 4:17-24 links erroneous worldview with a desire to ‘free up’ one’s sinful passions.

The Fall resulting from the Lie is the account of the abandonment of boundaries and limits in the name of freedom. “You will be like God” (Gen 3:5). Without the unifying foundation of cosmology, the rising generation hears biblical principles as disassociated bits and pieces of moral truth. Cosmology allows us to see creation structures as reality—grounded in the character of God. **Pornography is a worldview about humanity; and consequently, a worldview about the human body.** The ethical symptoms of ‘One-ist’ cosmology is the ‘*pornification*’ of a generation (Eph 4:19).

The influence of pornography on mainstream culture is affecting our self-perceptions and behavior in everything from fashion to body image to how we conceptualize our sexuality. *Kevin Scott, “The Porning of America.”* Our young Christian adults have been hyper-sexualized by popular culture and have little idea what to do about it. They are pumped up on ‘philosophical Viagra’. *Dr. Grant Horner* (Prof. of English, TMC)

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Rom 6:12-13). The *pornification* of culture through the electronic media is shaping the way this society invents itself sexually. Foucault’s vision of freedom without truth and no consequence sex, have *desacralized* the body. The result is a generation immersed in erotica—with mangled lives to show for it.

Young people under the influence of disconnect (between faith and life; creation and redemption) are seeking an identity based on developing self through consumption, rather than upon the Creator’s story. What suffers in this disconnect is a proper view of the body as a spiritual resource. It is precisely at this juncture that cyber-porn finds an unguarded entry point (Jay Wegter, “The Gnostic Disconnect”).

Q. 7 – Once a culture begins worshipping sex, how is it possible to ‘get the genie back in the bottle’ again? Renewal and revival begin with a proper biblical analysis—only then can repentance take place. Sexual sin is dysfunctional worship, and dysfunctional worship is idolatry (Col 3:5; Phil 3:18-19). ‘One-ism’ is narcissism. **God’s gift of gender difference and sexual oneness in marriage is designed to pull us out of ourselves and toward our spouse (Eph 5:23-33).**

When sex is taken out of its good, God-given context, it becomes a false integration point which fragments a person. Sexual sin is a dysfunction in worship. God has a glorious greater vision for sexual relations. When we give sex the greater vision God has for it, its sinful imitation loses its luster. **A weak grasp of God’s vision for male and female is symptomatic of the fact that Christianity is starving for cosmology.** Biblical cosmology gives us the reasons why we are to celebrate our God-given gender.

The common approach today is “Where does God fit into my life?” True believers should be asking, “Where does my life fit into this great story of God’s mission?” *Christopher Wright, “Mission of God”*

Christ is Lord of Creation; Lord of Redemption; Lord of Judgment; Source of meaning, rationality, and purpose. (Col 1:15-20). The incarnation destroys a divided view of reality. The *Logos* doctrine overcomes it by fusing pure rationality with history. God in the flesh brings a total holistic end to fragmentation (see Jn 1:1-5; Heb 1:1-3). Christ unifies all things in Himself (Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:19-20).

Q. 8 – Why does the ‘community’ of the Holy Trinity have so much to do with our relationships? The doctrine of the Trinity has profound implications for all reality, and for social relations including gender relations. To defend the family against state agendas, we need to make a case that only the biblical drama of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration gives a realistic, yet humane account of human nature and the structure and purpose of the family in society (Col 2:10).

The ‘mainstreaming of Social Contract Theory: Today our young people are being taught ‘ontological individualism’—that is the idea that individuals are the only reality (nothing outside of you defines you) (2 Tim 3:1-5). The Trinity implies that relationships are not created by sheer choice, but are built into the very essence of human nature that is made in the image of God (Eph 5:23-33). The implications of the Trinity: relationships are just as real and ultimate as individuals.

Because of diversity with perfect equality, the Trinity forms the pattern for relationships without inferiority. “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor 11:3).

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) spelled out a vision in which the state, by destroying all social ties, would be the ‘liberator’ of each person. Ironically, the autonomous individual with his false view of freedom, is actually the most vulnerable to totalitarian control. When the state is the ultimate definer of human flourishing, then the state is also the ultimate definer and enforcer of social relations.

It has been said that the Trinity is the ‘grammar’ of the Christian life and faith. Human beings, created in the image of the Triune God are constituted for relationships which glorify God (Jn 17:21).

The Trinitarian foundation for personhood is the key to understanding our identity and role as the image of God. The four characteristics of triune relations are to be lived out in our relationships in the church:

- Full equality
- Joyful intimacy
- Glad submission
- Mutual deference

God has given us the Spirit of His Son that we might live out our relationship to the Trinity and to one another (Gal 4:6). Without an absolute standard of freedom coming from our Creator, a person will ineffably move toward bondage (Jn 8:34). The whole purpose of Christ’s incarnation is to restore man to the image of God (Col 1:15-21).