



# “Understanding the Bible”

## Section 1: What is the Bible?

### Unit 1.3: Our Window to the World



#### I) From a Person to a Proposition

- In Unit 1.2 when we proclaimed the purpose of Scripture, we said that the Bible is primarily revelation of “personal truth *about* God.” But, we also stated that a secondary reason for this divine revelation is so that we can learn “propositional truth about a world that was created by God.” Now, we will shift our focus slightly from the personhood of God to the reality that we encounter as part of His remarkable creation. **Psalm 119:160** declares, “*The sum of your word is truth,*” so we can trust as we begin this journey that whatever the Bible says about our world is always true because it comes from the very mouth of the one who created it.

#### II) What Exactly is a Worldview?

- If the Bible defines what is true about reality, then it becomes our most trustworthy window to the world. The fact is that we all view reality through some type of window or lens, and we call this perspective our “**worldview**.” This is simply a term that we use to define the viewpoint from which we see and experience reality. This viewpoint has a direct influence on what we define as real and true about our existence. When you say things like, “*That is just how I look at things,*” or “*There ought to be a law against that,*” you are expressing your understanding of truth according to your own worldview. Basically, everyone’s worldview is formed by how we answer the most important questions of life. These questions typically include the following: *Is there a God?; Is this God knowable?; Who am I?; Where am I?; Why am I here?; Where did I come from?; What is my purpose for living?; Where am I going?; What is wrong with the world?; What is the solution to this problem?; How should I live?; What is my ultimate destiny?* Where we go to find the answers to these questions will ultimately determine what type of worldview we have.

#### III) Different Viewpoint = Different Vision

- There is a popular phrase in modern culture that has been birthed out of our desire to be politically correct, and that phrase is, “*What is true for you is not necessarily true for me.*” This effort to avoid confrontation stems from the fact that many have a different starting point in our understanding of God as we begin shaping our worldview. Although there are numerous worldviews in our culture today, here are just six of the most popular views that have influenced our 21<sup>st</sup> century society.
  - a) **Atheism** – God does not exist; Man is only physical and is a result of a natural, scientific process; Human beings are mortal; Man evolves, and then ceases to exist through annihilation.
  - b) **Agnosticism** – God may or may not exist but there is not enough proof; The physical world is all that matters; Man is the center of the universe; Humans evolve until death and annihilation.
  - c) **Pantheism** – All is God and God is all; God is infinite yet impersonal; Everything in the world is an illusion; The universe is just a part of God’s mind and everything is just a mode of His being.
  - d) **Deism** – God exists but is not involved with His creation; God spun the world into existence and then stepped away like a cosmic watch-maker; Human beings have full reign over the universe.
  - e) **Polytheism** – There are many gods and spiritual powers in the world; Man is immortal and must worship all gods to receive favor; Some highly favored humans may eventually become a god.
  - f) **Monotheism** – There is only one true God; He is both immanent (with humans) and transcendent (beyond humans); Humans are physical and spiritual and have broken themselves and the world through sin; Only through God’s help can mankind overcome evil; Mankind will be judged and the world will one day be re-created.

#### **IV) Building a Biblical Basis**

- When we build the foundation of our worldview on the truth of Scripture, we are building on solid ground. In fact, if the sum of all truth is God's Word, then the **Bible** is the only way that we could ever know what is real and what is not. Author Stephen J. Nichols in his book, *Welcome to the Story*, gives us a perfect definition of why we should trust the Bible to build our worldview. Nichols says, "*The Bible is a unique story by a unique Author: God. And because it is God's story, it is true. And because it is true, it gives a true account of the world and our place in it. And as we listen to the Bible's story, we begin to understand where we fit in and how the moments in our lives and the things around us fit together. We begin to make sense of our world and of our lives when we understand the story.*"

#### **V) Fearfully and Wonderfully Made**

- So, what are the most important elements of the biblical story that we need to understand to build a sound worldview of reality? In other words, how can we seek the Scriptures to answer life's big questions that we listed earlier? To begin, the Scriptures show us that a God exists and He created us with His own hands. **Psalm 139:13-14** says, "*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*" These words help us to understand that we were created by a powerful God, for a divine purpose, and that our response is to rightly worship this God of our creation.

#### **VI) Created to Glorify the Creator**

- As we continue to answer life's biggest questions with the revelation of Scripture, we can confidently say that the Bible teaches us what our ultimate purpose on this earth really is. **1 Corinthians 10:31** states, "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" This verse reveals to us that we were created to bring honor and glory to our Creator. Since we were made in God's image to be a reflection of His love and His holiness to the rest of the universe, that means we glory God by saying, thinking, and doing things that reflect His divine nature and attributes.

#### **VII) A Sinner Needs a Savior**

- Now we know the Bible clearly teaches that a God exists, and that He created us to be an image-bearer who reflects His love and holiness. But, are we as human beings failing or succeeding at fulfilling this purpose? If we are failing, what are the consequences and is there any hope for a solution? Thankfully, God gave us a complete portrait of our problem and solution in the book of Romans. Theologians often refer to this journey through the gospel message found in Romans as the "Roman Road." So, let us match up these important questions with the verses in Romans that correspond:
  - a) **What is wrong with the world?** **Romans 3:23** – "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*"
  - b) **What are the consequences of this problem?** **Romans 6:23** – "*For the wages of sin is death*"
  - c) **What is the solution to this problem?** **Romans 5:8**; "*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"
  - d) **How should I respond to this solution?** **Romans 10:9-10** "*...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*"

#### **VIII) Focused on the Finish Line**

- Finally, when we consider all the benefits of building our worldview on the foundation of the Bible, we should celebrate that we know our purpose and all the directions necessary to fulfill that purpose. We are not running around aimlessly in this world, but we instead have our eyes firmly focused on glorifying God with a finish line of eternal rewards awaiting us if we will remain faithful. The Apostle Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 9:24** – "*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.*" He then concludes with his own mission statement in **Philippians 3:14** when he says, "*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* May our biblical-based worldview enable us to press on and receive the prize!