

Stark Road Gospel Hall  
Summer Series 07  
**Developing a Biblical World View**  
**“The Truth about God”**  
Joel Joyce

**1) Why is our view of God so important?**

- a) **A distorted view is idolatry**
- i) *“The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.” A.W. Tozer*
  - ii) Second commandment prohibits graven images (Exo 20:4)
    - (1) God does not want a distorted image of Himself whether physical image or mental.
  - iii) The person who formulates in his mind a god after his own imagination is an idolater as is the Buddhist who bows at the graven images on her shelf. *Isa 29:16 ESV You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay...?*
  - iv) Calvin wrote in the sixteenth century that *“man’s mind is a perpetual factory of idols.”*
- b) **God is a jealous God who will not share His glory**
- i) *Isa 42:8 ESV I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.*
- c) **Our view of God directly impacts our world view and thus our behavior**
- i) **Negatively.**
    - (1) *Psa 135:18 ESV Those who make them [idols, false gods] become like them, so do all who trust in them!*
    - (2) *Rom 1:21-26 ESV For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. (24) Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, (25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (26) For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions....*
    - (3) If a person who believes that he will automatically go to heaven if he blows himself up in the name of his faith and have 70 virgins waiting for him, do you think that that could motivate him into action?
    - (4) A Materialist who believes man is the product of natural processes operating in a closed system will view not view her unborn child as having inherent dignity because he or she is made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore if she aborts her unborn child she is only eliminating a growth of foreign cells in her body. In her mind she is not killing a human being with an eternal soul.
  - ii) **Positively.**
    - (1) *2Co 3:18 ESV And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed** into the same image from one degree of glory to another....*
    - (2) *1Jn 3:2-3 ESV Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears **we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.** (3) **And everyone who this hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.***
  - iii) **Every day we are rubbing shoulders with people with a completely different concept of who God is.**
    - (1) The Hindu: God is everything, everything is god ~ Pantheism
      - (a) God is not distinct from creation
      - (b) God is the sum total of all that there is including good and evil, material and spiritual –the sun, the stars, earth, man, animals, trees, everything is God.
      - (c) He is likely to view God as impersonal and not moral
    - (2) The Muslim: God is one, but not a triune God
      - (a) Allah is not a Savior God
      - (b) He denies the deity of Christ
    - (3) The Deist ~ There is a creator, but He is remote and uninvolved in His creation.
      - (a) God is not knowable

- (b) He denies revelation through Scripture
- (4) Post Modernist
  - (a) All religions are true
  - (b) There are no moral absolutes; truth is relative
- (5) The Materialist ~ no God
  - (a) Everything that exist is the result of blind, impersonal, material forces
- iv) **A worldview that excludes God can be devastating**
  - (1) **It provides no foundation for human dignity** –man created in the image of God with an eternal soul (Gen 1:26). If man is the product of Evolution then he has no dignity and therefore killing the unborn and the elderly is essentially no different than killing a mosquito
  - (2) **It provides no foundation for morality.** Right and wrong just becomes opinions rather than an absolute standard that God has revealed in His Word (Exo 20) and written on the human heart (Rom 2:15). Therefore, if a nation like Germany decides that it wants to exterminate its Jewish citizens, who is to say it is wrong, by whose standards? Without God, everything is permissible.
  - (3) **It provides no foundation for a purpose in life.** If I am the product of Evolution than I am here by chance -the result of a mindless process. There is no purpose to my life. This has led many who think through the bleak implications of their world view to turn to suicide, drugs and alcohol to escape temporarily from the monotony of their existence. Contrast this with a Biblical view: *Rom 8:28-32 ESV And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (30) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (31) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

## 2) Do all religions lead to God?

- a) **Analogy of four blind men and an Elephant.** The analogy of the four blind men touching the Elephant is often uses to make the case that all religions lead to God. One blind man touched the elephant's side and announced that it was like a wall. Another man found the elephant's leg and described the large animal like a tree. The third man held its tail and declared the elephant was like a rope. And the fourth man grasped the trunk and concluded that it was like a snake. The four blind men are like the different religions of the world. All are reaching for God and viewing God from different perspectives. Are any wrong, or just experiencing various aspects of God?
- b) **Fallacies in the analogy**
  - i) This is appealing at first blush but it makes unwarranted assumptions. It appears to make the case for pluralism –that there are many paths to God.
  - ii) **Assumes objectivity**
    - (1) Does not account for the fallenness of man who has a propensity to redefine God
    - (2) Do men honestly asses all the evidence?
  - iii) **Assumes that each one's experience of God is different**
    - (1) We all look at the same creation, thus have the same general revelation (Psa 8, Rom 1).
  - iv) **Assumes that there is no pre-wired innate knowledge of God.**
    - (1) God has put eternity in the heart (Ecc 3:11). He has written His law in our hearts (Rom 2:15). He has made us spiritual beings conscious of God. He breathed into Adam the breath of life and man became a living soul.
  - v) **Assumes that there is no correspondence in God to ourselves**
    - (1) Since I am a person (I think, I reason, I communicate, I make moral choices) God must not be less. He must have similar qualities; He must be personal. Religions like Buddhism and Hinduism do not view God as a Person; He is impersonal; He is a force; He is not an intelligent being who plans, make choices, loves, promises, communicates, who is good, and is angry with evil etc...
  - vi) **Assumes that God has not revealed Himself**

- (1) God is not passive in His self-revelation. While God does not overwhelm us with self revelation, yet God does give enough evidence of Himself through creation and revelation (the Bible) to form a concrete, but not exhaustive, understanding of His person.
- vii) **Assumes that all religions are actually touching God**
  - (1) Isaiah clearly teaches us that men are touching their own creations whether it is a creation of the hand or a creation of the imagination (Isa 29:16). Or, worse, Paul teaches that behind the false gods are demons (1Cor 10:20).
- c) **All religions can't be true because they are contradictory.** Truth is objective and not contradictory we can conclude that all religions could be wrong but one thing is certain, they can't all be true.
- d) **Man started with knowledge of God and gave it up.** Romans 1 teaches us that man did not start with zero knowledge of God and just learn about God from his own experience. Rather He started with a knowledge of God and gave it up. He turns his back on knowledge he could have through creation, and he turns his back even on the Word of God and creates his own god.
- e) **The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one way to God**
  - i) *Joh 14:6 I am the way, the truth and the life, no man commeth unto the Father, but by me.*
  - ii) *1Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

### 3) How do we know which view of God is right?

- a) The Muslim thinks he is right, the Hindu claims she is right, the Buddhist says he right, the Christian insists he is right and the post modernist arbitrates and says they are all right. Who's right?
- b) **God's self revelation in creation**
  - i) *Rom 1:19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*
  - ii) So by merely looking at creation man should know that there is a God, and He is very powerful, supremely intelligent
  - iii) What other things might he conclude?
    - (1) God must love variety and beauty
    - (2) God must be orderly
    - (3) God must be something like us with the ability to reason, plan, and make decisions, and make moral choices for certainly if we can do that God must not be less in personhood than man. He must be greater than man but certainly not less.
  - iv) The truth that can be known about God by observing creation challenges the false notion that God does not exist (Atheism), or that He is part of His creation (Pantheism), or that He is impersonal (Deism), or that he is many (Polytheism) and nudges us toward the Biblical view that God is: One, Supreme, Personal, Powerful, Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
- c) **God's self revelation through His Word**
  - i) **The truth that God proclaims about Himself through Creation He spells out with greater precision and re-affirms through His written Word.**
  - ii) **Other religions have 'sacred writings', how do we know that the Bible is God's true revelation?**
    - (1) A Christian might say well I just know that the Bible is true; it rings true; it speaks to me; it convicts me; it comforts me; it assures me; it changes me. I know in my heart of hearts that it is true. You know it subjectively and there is nothing wrong with that. That is very legitimate. It is the Spirit of God brings that conviction and solidifies your faith.
    - (2) God in His grace not only gives subjective assurance but also has given objective evidence that the Bible gives us the Truth about God.
    - (3) **Three lines of evidence** that the Bible is a divine book and thus reveals the truth about God
      - (a) The Bible is the only book that makes hundreds of specific prophetic statements and those prophetic statements have come true 100% of the time.
        - (i) This is the criteria set down in Deut 18:21,22. The way you know a word is from the Lord is if it comes true.

- (ii) It is my understanding that the Koran, writings of Hinduism and Buddhism rarely if ever make prophetic claims, let alone those claims being precisely fulfilled.
- (iii) Isaiah teaches us that it is God's unique glory that He can proclaim an event in advance and not only know that it will come to pass but orchestrate human events in such a way so as to ensure that it comes to (Isa 42:8,9)
- (b) **Internal consistency.** The Bible is written over a period of 1600 years by forty authors from various backgrounds and in three languages, and yet it is internally consistent in its teaching about the most controversial issues: God, sin, human nature, human dignity, morality and life's purpose.
- (c) **The Bible is historically, geographically and scientifically accurate.** Archeological studies rather than casting doubt on the historical accuracy of the Bible have only validated its truth claims. *For further study see [http://www.starkrdgospelhall.com/bible\\_topics.htm](http://www.starkrdgospelhall.com/bible_topics.htm) Is the Bible God's Word? Joe Dennison Jr.*

#### 4) What is the God of the Bible like and how is He distinct?

##### a) God is a triune God –one God, three divine persons in the Godhead

##### i) What we should know about the Trinity

- (1) It is only known by the revelation of scriptures. It cannot be perceived by General Revelation. That is not to say that there are not subtle hints of the Trinity that God has embedded into His creation. But these are only perceived by looking at creation through the lenses of Scripture.
- (2) It is a mystery that cannot be fully grasped by human intellect. Finite minds cannot expect to fully understand the infinite. There are many things even in nature that remain mysteries: the mind and the brain; gravity; the properties of light. God is knowable but not fully comprehensible.
  - (a) *Psa 145:3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.*
  - (b) *"Faith indeed tells what the senses do not tell, but not the contrary of what they see. It is above them and not contrary to them."* Blaise Pascal in *Pensees* #265
- (3) It is hinted at in the OT but more fully developed in the NT

##### ii) What the trinity is not

- (1) Three Gods
- (2) Three expressions of one God
- (3) One eternal being who created the Son and the Holy Spirit as secondary Gods

##### iii) Scriptures that express the doctrine of the Trinity, or help us understand what it is and what it is not

##### (1) God is one substance. There are not three Gods.

- (a) Deut 4:35 *The Lord our God is one Lord*
- (b) 1Tim 2:5 *There is one God and one mediator between God and man...*
- (c) 1Cor 8:4 *There is none other God but one*
- (d) Gal 3:20 *God is one*

##### (2) There is plurality in the Godhead

- (a) The Hebrew word for God (Elohim) is plural
- (b) God speaks of Himself with plural pronouns
  - (i) *Gen 1:26 "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"*
  - (ii) *Gen 3:22 "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil"*
  - (iii) *Gen 11:7 "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language"*
  - (iv) *Isa 6:8 "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"*

##### (3) Each person of the Godhead is said to be God, and possess the essential attributes of God

- (a) The Father
  - (i) *Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*
- (b) The Son
  - (i) *Joh 1:1 The Word was God*
  - (ii) *Joh 8:58 Before Abraham was I AM (divine title)*
  - (iii) *Mat 11:27 No one knows the Father except the Son (divine attribute)*
- (c) The Holy Spirit

- (i) Acts 5:3,4 Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit .... You have not lied to men but to God
  - (ii) Psa 139:7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?
- (4) **Each Person of the Godhead is distinct with a unique role, although many works involve all three such as creation and redemption**
- (a) Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word [eternal being], and the Word was with God [distinct but equal; He was face to face with God], and the Word was God [the same in essence]
  - (b) 1Joh 4:14 The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, not the reverse
  - (c) The Son incarnate died on the cross. The Father did not die. The Holy Spirit did not die.
  - (d) On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent into the world, not the Father, and not the Son, (Joh 15:26)
- iv) **The doctrine of the Trinity is exceedingly Personal**
- (1) What is at the very heart of being a person? To love and to be loved, relationships, kinship, friendship, fellowship, communion, dialogue.
  - (2) Before creation only the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit existed
    - (a) There were divine Persons to love and to be loved
    - (b) There was fellowship, communion, relationships within the Godhead
    - (c) The God who is love was able to give expression to His love –giving and receiving
  - (3) “The Jewish and Moslem conception of the unity of God leaves Him before Creation in solitary, awful loneliness; the Christian belief that unity means union, not One alone, but Three in One, makes the abyss of antecedent Eternity glow with a glory of life and love”  
A. H. Finn (quoted in Studies in Bible Doctrine by W. Hoste)

**A careful read of Psalm 135 highlights a number of attributes that distinguishes the God of the Bible from other views of God prevalent in the world. The quotation is from the ESV.**

- (1) Praise the LORD! Praise the name of the LORD, give praise, O servants of the LORD,
- (2) who stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God!

1) **God is approachable and dwells among men.**

- a) **He is approachable**
  - i) Psa 145:18 ESV The LORD is **near** to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
  - ii) Heb 4:16 ESV Let us then with confidence **draw near** to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
  - iii) Heb 10:19 ESV Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to **enter the holy places** by the blood of Jesus,
- b) **He dwells among men.** While Heaven is His dwelling place and even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, yet He also dwells with His redeemed people. God is not an impersonal God who is far off, but a God who is near, Rev 21:3 ESV “the dwelling place of God is with man”
  - i) In the OT His dwelling place was the Temple
  - ii) In the Church age He dwells in the assembly (Mat 18:20; 1 Cor 3:16; 1Tim 3:15)
- c) **He dwells in redeemed man.** This is a NT truth which is the fruit of the cross. The language that speaks of God dwelling in redeemed man is unique to Christianity. You don’t hear words like Buddha in you, or Allah in you, or Mohamad in you. However, the expression is common in the NT.
  - i) Joh 14:23 ESV Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**
  - ii) Joh 14:17 ESV even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for **he dwells with you and will be in you.**
  - iii) 1Co 6:19 ESV Or do you not know that your body is a temple of **the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?**

iv) *Col 1:27 ESV To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.*

(3) *Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!*

2) **God is good.**

- a) In C.S. Lewis's book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lucy is learning from Mr. Beaver about Aslan the great lion (a Christ figure). She wonders if he is safe. Mr. Beaver's reply is, "Safe?" ... "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. **But he's good.** He's the King, I tell you." It is a great comfort to know that God who is said to be a consuming fire and all powerful, and sovereign (he does as he pleases) is also said to be good. The Lord Jesus stated that there is none good but God alone (Mat 19:17). Goodness in scripture goes beyond being righteous. Rom 5:7 says that "*scarcely for a righteous person will one die –though perhaps for a good person some might dare to die.*" Psa 145:17 says that *the LORD is righteous in all his ways and **kind** in all his works.* In other words, He is good.
- b) **That statement that God is good implies that God is moral.** Goodness is a moral quality
- i) Other moral qualities that are attributes of God
- (1) Holy (Lev 19:2)
  - (2) Light (1Joh 1:5)
  - (3) Righteous (Psa 116:5)
  - (4) Faithful -keeps his promises (Lam 3:23)
  - (5) Love (1Joh 4:8)
  - (6) Merciful (Psa 116:5)
  - (7) Gracious (Psa 116:5)
- c) **Morality springs from the character of God.** Morality is not something that is developed over time by civilized cultures. It comes from God and has no basis apart from God. Morality is a reflection of the character of God. If something is wrong it is because it is inconsistent with the character of God.

(4) *For the LORD has **chosen** Jacob **for** himself, Israel as his own possession.*

3) **God has a will.** He makes choices. He has a purpose. He is not an impersonal force. He is a Person.

(5) *For **I** know that the LORD is great, and that **our Lord is above all gods.***

- 4) **God is knowable.** *I know.* This is an emphatic statement in Hebrew. We don't have to be sheepish or hesitant to state that we know with absolute certainty that the God of the Bible is the one supreme God who has no equals. Not only is He knowable in the sense that we can know about Him, but **we can know Him personally:**
- a) *Deu 4:29 ESV But from there you will seek the LORD your God **and you will find him**, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul*
- b) *1Sa 3:7 ESV Now **Samuel did not yet know the LORD**, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.*
- c) *Joh 17:3 ESV And this is eternal life, that **they know you the only true God**, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

5) **He is supreme and has no equals "our LORD is above all gods"**

*Isa 45:5 ESV I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God....*

(6) *Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. (7) He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.*

- 6) **He is sovereign over His creation** and controls it. He answers to no one. The things mentioned here are things that man has absolutely no control over. Man can harness the wind and water, but bringing clouds, lighting, and wind are beyond his control, but not God's. Aren't you glad that the God who does whatever He pleases, is good.

- 7) **He is distinct from His creation.** He is not a part of it. He existed prior to matter, space, time and any being beside himself. This is distinct from the Pantheistic view that does not see God as distinct from His creation.
- Joh 1:3 ESV All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*
  - Col 1:16-17 ESV For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. (17) And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

(8) *He it was who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and of beast;*

(9) *who in your midst, O Egypt, sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants;*

- 8) **Intervenes in His creation.** God not only is sovereign over His creation He intervenes in the affairs of men. He delivered his people from Egypt, dislodged nations and settled Israel in their inheritance.
- 9) **He intervenes with miracles** –*He sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh.* If God is the creator and thus the one who established the laws of nature, if He is sovereign and all powerful, if His purpose is to have a relationship with men and to reveal His glory and exult His Son, why is it difficult to believe that He would intervene in His own creation in order to manifest Himself. This distinguishes God from the Deist view that says that God is remote and does not intervene, and so denies the possibility of miracles.

**Why don't we see more miracles?**

- If they were common place it wouldn't cause wonder. They wouldn't have their intended impact
- God gives man enough evidence for Himself so that men seek Him, but does not overwhelm Him so that man bows the knee out of dread.

- 10) **He is a Savior God** –a God who redeems.
- This physical deliverance foreshadows a greater redemption –the redemption of man completely, spirit, soul and body. This distinguishes Him from not only Pantheism, Deism, Humanism, but also Islam, which is fundamentally a good works religion. Human religion and philosophy do not adequately define man's greatest problem (that he is a helpless sinner), nor do they have an adequate solution to the problem (Redemption). The God of the Bible not only meets man's greatest need as a sinner but provides a salvation that satisfies the longings of his soul.
  - He is the only Savior** . Apart from Him there is no salvation. He saves by Himself. He does not share His glory with others.
    - Isa 43:11 ESV I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.*
    - Joh 14:6 ESV Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
    - Heb1:3 When He had **by himself** purges our sin...*

- 11) **He is omniscient.** He struck down only the firstborn of Egypt. He knew the firstborn of every family.

(10) *who struck down many nations and killed mighty kings,*

(11) *Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan,*

(12) *and gave their land as a heritage, a heritage to his people Israel.*

- 12) **He is sovereign over the nations.** The rise and fall of nations and their leaders is under God's control. He is righteous and just in the way that he deals with the nation, Gen 18:25 Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
- Dan 2:21 ESV He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;*

- b) *Dan 4:34-35 ESV At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; (35) all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

*(13) Your name, O LORD, endures forever, your renown, O LORD, throughout all ages.*

**13) God is eternal.** The name LORD or Jehovah (16 times in ch) which was God's personal Name. It carries in its meaning the idea of eternal and self-existent. God did not have a beginning. The universe is not eternal. It had a beginning, contrary to what was once believed in scientific circles a century ago. Only God is eternal.

- a) *Col 1:17 He is before all things*  
b) *Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*

*(14) For the LORD will vindicate [judge KJV] his people and have compassion on his servants.*

**14) God is the just judge of all the world**

- (13) Psa 9:7-8 ESV But the LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, (8) and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.*

In contrast to the greatness of the One True God, the Psalmist now speaks of the shallowness of human religions.

- (15) The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands.  
(16) They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see;  
(17) they have ears, but do not hear, nor is there any breath in their mouths.*

**15) God speaks, God sees, God hears. He is the living God**

*(18) Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them!*

**This underscores why it is so important to have a right view of God.**

- (19) O house of Israel, bless the LORD! O house of Aaron, bless the LORD!  
(20) O house of Levi, bless the LORD! You who fear the LORD, bless the LORD!*

**God is the object of worship. This is our proper response to God.**