

- We have been going through a teaching series on worldview.
 - We said that every person has a worldview, which is simply the lens through which they see the world and that lens determines the decisions they make and how they live.
 - Romans 12:2 tells us that we are to not be conformed to this world, or its way of thinking, but rather be transformed by the renewing of our mind.
 - This means we are either going to absorb or live the way the world does or we will choose and develop our worldview to a different standard.
 - Our goal is to see the world increasingly the way Jesus sees it, because the more we see it as Jesus sees it, the more it will make sense to do the things Jesus said and live the way Jesus lived.
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- The worldview today is one we are bombarded with every day. It starts in elementary school and only intensifies in high school and college. In fact, those that are in high school and college are probably closest to the effects of this worldview right now. It comes through in our movies, our sitcoms, our art and in our museums. It is the philosophy of naturalism.
 - The world came into being through natural selection. The world happened by chance. Evolution decided who and what we are.
 - If this doesn't sit right with you and you question whether or not there might be another explanation, you are immediately branded as close minded and not very bright. Everyone knows that all the evidence supports evolution and natural selection. The only people that don't really believe it are religious crazies who need a crutch to lean on or who simply aren't willing to embrace the facts.
 - You might be accused of having an agenda, of trying to mix science and religion. At best you are tolerated as a weak minded individual who needs God because you can't hack this world on your own.
 - It can cause you to wonder if all the evidence points towards evolution, then maybe there are parts of the bible you need to re-examine. Maybe taking it literally isn't right. Maybe it's not right at all. You have doubts about all those things you learned when you were younger.
 - If you come to the conclusion that your faith is real, and God is real, you avoid conversations in the classroom, with friends, or anyone else about this topic because the evidence is all on their side and you really don't like being a whacked out, right wing, low brow, narrow minded Christian.
 - What are we to do? How do we engage? What is true?
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- This topic is enormous and there are thousands of books and articles on this subject, so if this topic rings with you, I encourage you to read more. Do the research.
 - This morning I want to touch on 3 things:
 - 1) What is Naturalism? What does it mean?
 - 2) Some key questions that need to be answered in relation to this topic? Why do the terms people use matter?
 - 3) How does God see it? What are the implications of this for Christ-followers?

I. What is naturalism?

- This worldview has come to prominence relatively recently. At its most pure and basic level:
- A) Matter is all that exists. The observable, repeatable universe that we can see, touch and measure is the ultimate and the only thing we can be sure of. It's the only reality.
- The Spiritual realm is unprovable and simply a product of our wishing. There is no supernatural.
- B) Everything is the result of evolution.

- Until 18th century, most scientists believed in God as a first cause for everything.
- But Charles Darwin began a process that continues to this day that says we are nothing more than highly complex biological machines.
- The universe began 15 billion years ago. 5 billion years ago evolution began with the formation of amino acids, the first cell and then lower species and ultimately us.
- We are simply the result of infinite time + infinite chance.
- The naturalistic version of the origins of life go something like this: “In the beginning there was nothing. And nothing said to itself, ‘Let us become something, explode, and become an ordered universe that is governed by laws of science, physics, and mathematics. Let us become a universe that is able to sustain life.’ And it happened. All of the universe was created. Nothing became something, exploded, and became everything.”
- This worldview has some huge implications.
- Implication #1: God does not exist. This is atheism. God is simply a social construct.
- There is no greater power, intelligence or design in our universe. It simply operates according to developed and observable laws.
- Yet oddly, despite all the teaching that God does not exist, studies show that despite what the media would tell you, 80-90% of people believe there is some deity that was involved in the beginning of our universe. Hmmmmm.
- Implication #2: We are capable of self-improvement as a species. We should use science and technology to benefit mankind. We should work towards some type of utopian society and can do so through self-improvement and self-effort.
- This has all kinds of problems because even the most impartial person would be hard put to say the world is getting better, even with all of our developments and advancements.
- Implication #3: The only meaning to life comes from what we give it.
- When we die, that’s it and the end of universe is when everything goes extinct. This means there are no ethical absolutes – simply social group constructs.
- This has its own set of problems because most people believe true evil exists in the world but a naturalistic worldview cannot hold this view and be consistent.
- In order for true evil to exist, there must be some external standard to appeal to, not simply a societal construct. Otherwise, the holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia and ISIS are simply arbitrary events and beliefs that are relative.

II. Key Questions to Consider

- So at the risk of oversimplification, there are some key questions to consider when talking to someone about or examining the ideas behind this worldview.

A. What is the “uncaused cause”?

- What started it all? Even if you accept the Big Bang theory, naturalism cannot explain what kicked it off. A caused B which caused C and so on. But what caused A? The only way naturalism works is if the universe is eternal, yet almost every scientist agrees that the universe had a beginning despite recent attempts by scientists who are trying to come up with theories that say the universe is eternal.
- The problem is that this doesn’t fit with observable science. The universe is running down. The second law of thermodynamics states that the universe is running out of usable energy. Eventually, it will end. If it ends, it must have had a beginning.
- The universe is expanding. Space itself is expanding. This means it must have started somewhere. Scientists discovered a radiation echo that seemed to indicate some type of beginning and even Einstein’s theory of relativity indicated the universe had a beginning.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

- It all began with a decision by God to create. He did it. He is eternal and he is the uncaused cause.

B. What do you mean by evolution?

- Any time someone says evolution is a fact, you must ask what they mean.
- Micro-evolution is the adaptation of species over time. It is real. It is observable. It is true. The different dog breeds we have today have been bred to be different. There are examples of insects, birds and others that have changed to adapt to changes in their environment.
- It's not even contrary to what the bible says.

Genesis 1:11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. . . 24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind."

- Macro-evolution on the other hand is the teaching that through small changes, organisms and animals can jump from one species to another.
- Scientists use micro-evolution to prove macro-evolution. There is a huge difference between adapting to your environment and becoming a whole different kind of animal.
- Micro-evolution is fact. Macro-evolution is nothing but speculation. It has never been observed. The fossil record is almost completely silent on it, particularly where it should have demonstrated this over and over again.
- To say it can happen is not science, but a statement of blind faith.

C. What do you do with morality?

- I touched this earlier, but you cannot hold to a naturalistic worldview and say that ISIS is evil, that the Nightclub bombing in Orlando or airport bombing in Turkey are morally wrong. At best you can say that they are bad because they mess with your version of society. But it is all relative.
- Yet anthropology has shown that there are common codes of ethics across all civilizations at all times. They affirm honesty, respect for parents, care for the poor. No lying, stealing, murdering or adultery. Even if these are defined differently, the ethics hold. Why?

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

- Naturalism cannot answer that deep down knowledge that some things are simply wrong. Evil. Bad. Because we were designed by a good God and disobeyed, we *know* at some level the idea of objective right and wrong.
- Famous atheist Richard Dawkins says that morality is just a relativistic trick of evolution to get our selfish genes into the next generation. But on the other hand, he rails against the God of the Old Testament as a vindictive, bloodthirsty, homophobic, racist, genocidal, sadomasochistic, malevolent bully. Do you see the problem?
- The problem of evil is only a problem if morality is objective.

III. Implications for Christ-followers.

- What do we do with all this? This is interesting information, but so what?

A. Faith and science can go hand in hand.

- Naturalists want to make it about science vs. the bible, but this is never the issue.
- At its heart this is not a scientific debate but rather a worldview debate.
- You know this because when a debate like this is engaged, it most often degenerates into an attack on the person making the argument instead of the argument itself.
- *“One thing all real scientists agree upon is the fact of evolution itself. It is a fact that we are cousins of gorillas, kangaroos, starfish, and bacteria. Evolution is as much a fact as the heat of the sun. It is not a theory, and for pity’s sake, let’s stop confusing the philosophically naive by calling it so. Evolution is a fact.”* (Richard Dawkins)
- Many scientists go as far as saying that if you question evolution, you are questioning science. Those who believe in God are irrational and illogical because they believe we are contradicting known, observable science.
- Yet the bible indicated an orderly systematic world long before science did.
- In the face of many ancient philosophies that said the world is capricious and random, Scripture says the exact opposite.

Genesis 8:22 “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

- God created a world that is governed by laws, systems and predictability. It actually is evidence of a thinking, intelligent design.
- It’s actually this predictable system that makes miracles so amazing. In fact, a miracle can only exist because there is some system of natural order in the first place. Otherwise a miracle is simply a random event. The burning bush was a miracle because what usually happens when a bush is on fire? It burns up.
- Do not fear the “evidence.” You are not of lower intelligence if you follow Jesus. Embrace the questions. Be totally secure in the exploration of your faith. For the last 100 years, people a lot brighter than your professor, your friend, your teacher have tried to prove God doesn’t exist. They have all utterly failed.

B. You do not need to compromise.

- The temptation is to buy into the lies of naturalism and to believe that since everyone (including all the scientists) says all the evidence says it, it must be true.
- Remember though, that until Copernicus and Galileo, all scientists agreed that the world was the center of the universe.
- There are more insidious results for Christ followers.
- We are intimidated into keeping quiet about our faith.
- My faith is “personal”. It’s what I believe. It is good for me – there is no objective truth to it.
- I am a victim – my problems are just how I was designed.
- I can fix myself. I can try harder to be and to do.
- We can combine beliefs. Since evolution is right, God simply created everything using evolution.
- Genesis is simply an allegory and a story to show God was involved.
- God just created everything and let it go (this is called Deism by the way).

Psalms 139:13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I

was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

C. The real issue is a heart issue.

- You cannot argue someone into the kingdom through an evolutionary debate.
- In fact, the minutiae of the argument over details can obscure the big picture.
- The issue always come back to Jesus and what you do with him.

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

- God not only designed the world, but he designed into it the capacity to know God, to know he exists, with a need to pursue him.
- Because if God started everything, then a person's response to God is of paramount importance. It is the most important question.
- *"Scientists start by assuming that naturalism is true, and they try to give purely natural explanations for everything."* (Defeating Darwinism, Phillip Johnson) Anything else requires a person to make a decision in regards to God. Alternately, we can ignore him altogether.
- We do not need to be intimidated by this.
- For yourself, know that your faith is grounded in reason. I believe it is the only worldview that makes sense of all the issues at play.
- My personal feeling is that a naturalistic viewpoint takes far more faith to believe than one that puts God at the center.
- As for others? If you are having a discussion with friends about the whole idea of a naturalistic world, your best ammunition is simply to ask questions around these three topics. What is their solution to the uncaused cause? What do they mean by evolution? Do they think objective evil exists? Ask questions.
- But more importantly, pursue Jesus. See the world the way he sees it. Live the way he tells you to live it. Be in community. Allow him to change you. This will have more impact on your world than anything else.
- Because Jesus is the greatest answer to the greatest questions.