

Compare 8 Popular Worldviews

# worldviews



## comparison

- monotheism
- atheism
- pantheism
- panentheism
- deism
- finite godism
- polytheism

# what is a **worldview**?

A worldview is simply a view of the world. Everyone has one. A worldview is the set of beliefs we hold about the big questions of life.

Here's how some experts describe a worldview:

*A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world.*

—James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*

*A worldview is a map of reality. It is the framework of beliefs, values, and images within which a person makes decisions and conducts the business of living.*

—Leland Ryken, *Culture in Christian Perspective*

*...every person carries within his head a mental model of the world – a subjective representation of reality.*

—Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*

## why is your **worldview** important?

Whether you know it or not, your worldview influences the decisions you make in life: Whether you go to church or go surfing instead; whether you pursue earthly wealth or spiritual gain; whether you live in fear or hope.

Some beliefs you might hold strongly, while other beliefs you probably don't think about often. Your worldview changes as your beliefs change. If you change the strong core beliefs in your worldview, then your life will change drastically.

Your worldview may or may not be true, just like beliefs. A worldview can be true about some things and not true about other things. Beliefs in a worldview are true if they match up with what really is.

# what are the **big questions** of life?

## what is **real**?

Is the world I experience real or is it just a figment of my imagination? Are miracles real or are they just natural occurrences we don't understand? Can I even know what's real?

## is there a **God**?

Is there just one God or many gods? Is God close to us or distant? Is there even a God out there?

## where did we come **from**?

Did God create human beings or did we just by chance evolve from lower life forms? Do we have past lives we can't remember? What does it even mean to be human?

## how should we **live**?

What can we do to get to know God? What does God want from us? How can we know what's right and wrong? Do our lives have purpose?

## where are we **going**?

What happens when we die? Is there an afterlife in Heaven or are we reincarnated into other living beings? Or is death the end?

# worldviews comparison

Worldview

Atheism

Pantheism

Pan-En-Theism

Deism

Finite God-ism

Polytheism

Monotheism

Biblical Christianity

# worldviews comparison

Worldview	Is There a God?	What Is Real?	Where Did What's Real Come From?	What Is a Human Being?	Are Humans Basically Good or Evil? How Bad is the Flaw?	Is it Possible to Know Anything at All?
<b>Atheism</b>	There is no God	Physical matter and energy are the only reality	Unknown	Humans are a product of evolution	People can be either good or bad; humans may be flawed but can be corrected	Yes, but only by the senses and logical deduction
<b>Pantheism</b>	God is all	God is real, but the world is an illusion	Only God is real	The human core is the same essence as God	Humans are good internally but may be caught in outward illusion; the flaw is also illusion	Only the recognition of godhood is real, all else is illusion
<b>Pan-En-Theism</b>	God is in all	God is real and generates reality	God	Part of God	Humans are both; flaw is part of the growth process	Yes, by the experience of becoming/growing
<b>Deism</b>	God is a distant Creator	God is the maker of the real	God	Most complex creature of God's making	People can be either good or bad—they contain all that is necessary for choosing; no flaw exists	Yes, by the senses and logical deduction
<b>Finite God-ism</b>	There is a God, but He is limited	God and something else eternal are real	God and something else	Produced by God (possible for humans to be either created or theistically evolved)	Can be either; no flaw exists	Yes, by reason and supernatural revelation
<b>Polytheism</b>	There are many Gods	Gods and the cosmos are real	Various theories (myths) about origins	Creation of the gods	Can be either; no flaw exists	Yes, by reason and supernatural revelation
<b>Monotheism</b>	There is only one God	God is the maker of the real	God who created out of nothing	Created by God as His signature masterpiece	Originally good, but now bent; the flaw is serious but can be overcome with God's help	The worship of God is the beginning of all knowledge
<b>Biblical Christianity</b>	There is only one Triune God	God is the maker of the real	God who created out of nothing	Created by God as His signature masterpiece	Originally good, but now bent; the flaw is fatal, and only God can fix it	The worship of God is the beginning of all knowledge

How Do We Know What Is Right and Wrong?	What is Truth?	What Is Evil?	Where Do Laws Come From?	What Happens to a Person at Death?	Can Miracles Happen?	What is the Meaning of Human History?	How Do We Get to Know God?
By experience and reason	Truth is the ultimate explanation	Evil is that which is destructive	Humans make laws	Ceases to exist	No	There is no ultimate meaning	There is no God to know
Right and wrong are an illusion	Truth is an illusion	Evil is an illusion	Laws are a part of this world of illusion	Reincarnation or absorption into God	Yes, but they are illusory	History and its meaning are both illusion	Look within; god is in person
By growth and becoming	Truth is that which God realizes, or makes real, through growth	Evil is simply mistakes to be overcome	Laws evolve out of the ever-growing mind of God	There may be some afterlife	No	History is part of the unfolding of God	By knowing the evolving spirit of the cosmos
By experience and reason	Truth is the mind of God	Evil is that which is irrational	Laws reflect God's mind and are built into Creation	There may be some afterlife	No	History is the self-created story of humankind	By examining God's Creation
By reason and supernatural revelation	Truth is that by which God operates	Evil is God's enemy	Laws are made by God	Some kind of afterlife of reward or punishment	Yes in theory, but most systems say not in practice	History is the struggle between good and evil	By allying ourselves to God and God's cause
By reason and supernatural revelation	Truth is ultimate reality	Evil is disharmony, imbalance	Laws are the decisions of the gods	Soul goes to place of the dead, may be immortalized	Yes	History is entertainment for the gods	By reverencing each deity's worship system
By God's acting on the reason, and supernatural revelation	God is the basis for all truth	What God is not and does not do	Laws are built into Creation and God reveals them	Judgment and either heaven or hell	Yes	History is the drama God has created for His glory and for human good	By worshiping and following God only
By God's acting on the reason, and supernatural revelation	God is the basis for all truth	What God is not and does not do	Laws are built into Creation and God reveals them	Judgment and either heaven or hell	Yes	History is the drama God has created for His glory and for human good	Only through relationship with Christ that involves believing and following Him

## digging deeper:

what is required  
of a **worldview**?



a **worldview** should be coherent.

*In other words, it needs to make logical sense. Take, for instance, a worldview that claims the only truth we can know is that there is no truth we can know. This belief is self-contradictory.*

a **worldview** should be consistent.

*If someone believes there is no such thing as right and wrong, then it's inconsistent to say any action—like murder or racism—is wrong, because in this worldview nothing can be right or wrong.*

a **worldview** should be comprehensive. *If a worldview leaves the big questions of life unanswered it leaves us unsatisfied and directionless. For example, a worldview that says God is so distant from us that we can't know anything about him leaves us separated from our Creator and clueless about what God might want from us. If a worldview—Christian or otherwise—doesn't answer some of life's most important questions, then it is not much of a worldview.*

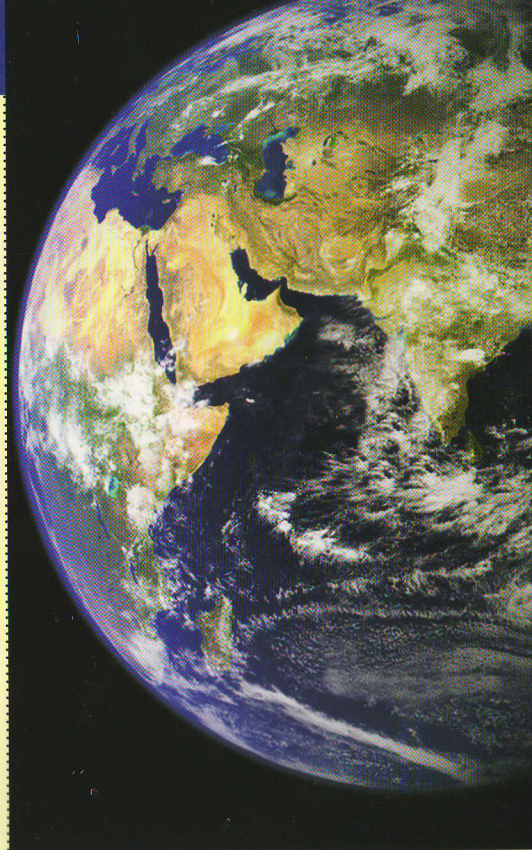
## digging deeper:

why is a **Biblical worldview** important?

**interpretation:** it gives us glasses through which we can see meaning to life. *Just as an unfocused camera provides a blurry image, our view of the world remains blurry without some glasses that correct it. All of us see the world through some kind of glasses; our understanding of the world depends on the glasses we use. A biblical Christian worldview gives us a lens through which we can see and interpret life.*

**stabilization:** it gives us an anchor to which we can hold, a mooring in life. *A ship navigates in the vast ocean by plotting its position relative to the fixed position of the stars. Any sailor will tell you that it is hard to determine the position of the stars if the sea is rough. And, of course, the entire process would be worthless if the stars themselves were not fixed in the sky. In spiritual and intellectual matters, a worldview gives a person a stable deck from which he can plot his position in the universe.*

**proclamation:** it gives us a platform from which we can speak a message of life. *In a world of chaos and confusion, a coherent worldview also gives a person a clarity and focus that attracts attention; it gives the Christian a platform from which to speak to the world.*



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