

## *The Exclusivity of Christianity*

### **What is a worldview?**

A *worldview* is a philosophical system that attempts to explain how the facts of reality relate and fit together. It is a strong determining factor that contributes to what a person believes about the world.

Since our thoughts influence our emotions, reactions and behaviors, it's particularly important for us to know what we believe and why we believe it.

### **How many worldviews are there?**

There are seven worldviews: theism, atheism, pantheism, panentheism, deism, polytheism, and finite godism.

1. **Atheism:** No God exists beyond the universe or in it. The universe or cosmos is all there is or ever will be; it is self-sustaining. Famous atheists: Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud.
  - God: He does not exist; only the universe exists.
  - Universe: It is eternal; or it randomly came to be.
  - Humanity (origin): We have evolved, are made of molecules, and are not immoral.
  - Humanity (destiny): We have no eternal destiny and will be annihilated.
  - Evil (origin): It is real, caused by human ignorance.
  - Evil (destiny): It can be defeated by man through education.
  - Ethics (basics): They are created by, and grounded in humanity.
  - Ethics (nature): They are relative, determined by the situation.
2. **Pantheists (the New Age movement):** God is the universe. Represented by certain forms of Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, and the New Age movement.
  - God: He is one, infinite, usually impersonal, he is the universe.
  - Universe: It is an illusion, a manifestation of God, who alone is real.
  - Humanity (origin): The human's true self is god.
  - Humanity (destiny): Our destiny is determined by karma/cycles of life.
  - Evil (origin): It is an illusion, caused by errors of the mind.
  - Evil (destiny): It will be reabsorbed by God.
  - Ethics (basics): They are grounded in lower manifestations of God.
  - Ethics (nature): They are relative, transcending the illusion of good and evil.
3. **Theists:** The world is more than just the physical universe, but not the world itself. Represented by traditional religions of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.
  - God: He is one, personal, moral infinite in all his attributes.
  - Universe: It is finite, created by an infinite God.
  - Humanity (origin): We are immortal, created and sustained by god.
  - Humanity (destiny): By choice we will be either eternally with or separated from God.
  - Evil (origin): It is privation or imperfection caused by choice.
  - Evil (destiny): It will be ultimately defeated by God.
  - Ethics (basics): They are grounded in the nature of God.
  - Ethics (nature): They are absolute, objective, and prescriptive.

## Falsities about Jesus

All religions have certain aspects, such as a founder or key person, key writings, ways that our lives should be lived out on the earth, as well as theories on death. However, the main divisive argument is Jesus; his identity is the one thing that separates Christianity from them all.

- Jesus was not God; he was just a great prophet.
  - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created... [Col 1:15-20]
- Jesus was created by God.
  - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. [John 1:1-5]
- Jesus is not necessary because there is no sin.
  - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. [1 John 1:8-10]
  - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. [Rom 3:23-30]
- Jesus was not bodily raised from the dead.
  - For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. [1 Cor 15:1-8]
- There are many ways to God, not just one.
  - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." [John 14:6-7]
- Jesus is not necessary because people must pay for their own sins by obeying all teachings of the church, doing good things, etc.
  - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. [Eph 2:8-9]

## Wrap-up questions

1. Falsities of Jesus: Of the six we've listed above, which of these have you struggled with? We'll be covering the reliability of the bible next week, but how might you defend each of the corresponding Christian worldviews outside of the bible?
2. Worldviews: In the skit you saw three people with their own worldviews. In your own life, can you think of someone who has a worldview different from yours? What are some common questions you've been attacked with? As a group, discuss how you might respond.
3. Often times, when defending the gospel, we're too focused on how to defend our own faith, and we don't spend time listening or learning about other religions. When you share the gospel, what are the top three things that you share? Do other religions address those same issues, and if so, how? If you were to look objectively across the religions, what aspects are appealing of the other worldviews?