

Worldviews

“A collection of beliefs and ideas about the central issues of life.”

Our worldview is the lens through which we view the world.

Every religion or ideology can be found within one of three categories.

The Three Worldviews:

1. Theism
2. Atheism
3. Pantheism

Five Vital Questions:

1. Is there a God? What is He like?

- **Theism:** Yes there is a God (or gods) For the three major world religions, there is just one God who is the creator of all, all knowing, all powerful, all present and all good.
- **Atheism:** Atheism denies the existence of God or gods.
- **Pantheism:** Everything is God – God is one with the universe.

2. What is the ultimate reality?

- **Theism:** God is the ultimate reality who is beyond our realm of existence.
- **Atheism:** There is no supernatural domain or existence beyond this world.
- **Pantheism:** The ultimate reality is God – indistinguishable and indescribable. All distinctions are illusions. (animals, plants, rocks, humans, stars... everything's God.)

3. How is knowledge obtained?

- **Theism** Knowledge is acquired through our five senses and other means, including the revelation in scripture.

- **Atheism:** Since this world is all there is, any knowledge obtained must be about it and it alone. We're limited to empirical knowledge, and the scientific method is the gold standard.
- **Pantheism:** Knowledge is not acquired through rational inquiry, but meditation and other practices intended to empty the mind. (chanting and various other techniques are used for altering consciousness and experiencing unity with "the all.")

4. What is the basis of morality?

- **Theism** The basis of morality is God...right, wrong, good, evil-all based upon the nature of the infinite God who created everything.
- **Atheism:** Generally, atheists do not believe morality to be objectively true. Typically, it is believed to have emerged through evolution to improve humanity's odds of survival (not all agree with this.)
- **Pantheism:** Even objective good and evil are illusions. Pantheist Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science said, "Evil is but an illusion and it has no real basis. Evil is a false belief."

5. Who are we as human beings?

- **Theism** Human beings are not on par with God – but we are certainly on a higher plane than the rest of the animal kingdom. We are unique – and in Christ we too, will be exalted higher than the angels (Hebrews 2.7-9; Ephesians 2.6; 1 Corinthians 6.3)
- **Atheism:** We are electromechanical machines – animals that have grown in complexity over eons thanks to evolution. "We are...robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes." –Richard Dawkins
- **Pantheism:** Humans (like everything else) are God. But under universal illusion and thus do not realize our divine nature. The goal, then is to realize the illusion and win release so we can see and experience the God we are really are.

A Basic Test:

1. A worldview is false if its core beliefs are internally contradictory or incoherent.
 - **Pantheism:** Pantheism is incoherent. In pantheism, I am God, but impersonal. I am the changeless All – yet I am encouraged to discover this fact about myself. These statements are self-contradictory.
 - **Atheism:** If objective moral values do exist, then atheistic materialism must be false.
 - **Theism:** Though the answers are not easy, theism is consistent and coherent. What about the existence of good and evil? Theism does not deny the existence of morality (good and evil) rather it calls it what it is. The explanation is that God created humans with the freedom to choose between good and evil.
2. A worldview should be rejected if it cannot be consistently lived out.
 - **Pantheism:** Philosophically a pantheist will claim that objective moral values do not exist – until they are faced with an immoral action against themselves.
 - **Atheism:** Is this statement true or just an opinion: “Torturing innocent children for fun is evil.”
 - **Theism:** Can theism be lived out consistently? Logically speaking, yes, for either good or evil.