

Christ in the Psalms

The Righteousness of God vs.
The Righteousness of Man

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Isaiah 44 Summary : Evaluating a Worldview

We see that the idol worshipper's worldview is deeply flawed

Idol : A crafted image representing divine power.

Reductionism : Reduces divine reality to a finite, man-made object.

Contradicts Reality : A lifeless idol cannot see, act, or save.

Contradicts Itself : The object of worship is both used for mundane tasks and exalted as a god.

Solution : The worshipper is called to recognize the true God, who alone is worthy of worship and trust.

Worldview Discernment in the Psalms

Identify the Idol

The Psalms repeatedly expose the futility of idolatry, where people substitute false gods or human constructs for the true God.

"But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see... Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them." (Psa. 115:4-8)

This psalm identifies the emptiness of idols, whether physical or ideological, showing how misplaced trust in anything other than God leads to ruin.

"For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens." (Psa. 96:5)

This psalm contrasts false idols with the true Creator, highlighting the need to evaluate and reject false objects of worship.

Worldview Discernment in the Psalms

Identify the Idol's Reductionism

Psalms critiques any worldview that reduces life to material or finite realities, emphasizing God's sovereign role as the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.” (Psa. 14:1)

This critiques atheistic or materialistic worldviews, showing that denying God leads to moral and intellectual corruption.

“For all can see that the wise die, that the foolish and the senseless also perish, leaving their wealth to others... People, despite their wealth, do not endure; they are like the beasts that perish.” (Psa. 49:10-12)

This psalm critiques the reduction of human life to wealth or status, exposing the limits of materialistic views.

Worldview Discernment in the Psalms

Test the Idol – Does it Contradict Reality?

The Psalms frequently reflect on the reliability of God's truth as opposed to human falsehood.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.” (Psa. 19:1-4)

This psalm appeals to natural revelation, affirming that creation itself testifies to God's existence and challenges any worldview that denies this.

“The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.” (Psa. 33:10-11)

This psalm critiques worldviews that place ultimate trust in human schemes or philosophies, showing how they fail when tested against God's eternal purposes.

Worldview Discernment in the Psalms

Test the Idol – Does it Contradict Itself?

The Psalms point out the inherent contradictions in trusting anything other than God.

“Take notice, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise? Does he who fashioned the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge?” (Psa. 94:8-11)

This passage critiques those who believe they can act without accountability, pointing out the self-contradiction in denying God’s omniscience while relying on their own limited understanding.

“Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.” (Psa. 146:3-4)

This psalm highlights the inconsistency of relying on human leaders or systems, which ultimately fail and perish.

Worldview Discernment in the Psalms

Replace the Idol: Make the Case for the True God

Many psalms point believers back to God as the ultimate source of truth, guidance, and salvation.

“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.” (Psa. 1:1-2)

This psalm presents God’s Word as the foundation for evaluating all other beliefs and finding true wisdom and flourishing.

“As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD’s word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?” (Psa. 18:30-31)

This psalm declares God’s supremacy and perfection, inviting people to reject false idols and build their lives on the firm foundation of God’s truth.

Resources

- The Truth Project – Focus on the Family
(<https://tinyurl.com/57ua3m5f>)
- How then should we live? – Francis Shaefer
(<https://tinyurl.com/3fc6uzbx>)
- World View Academy – Bill Jack
(<https://tinyurl.com/29ctus8n>)
- Finding Truth – Nancy Pearcey
(<https://a.co/d/6ajy38l>)
- The First Apology of Justin Martyr
(<https://tinyurl.com/3t979suz>)
- **Seven men who rule the world from the grave**
– David Breese (<https://a.co/d/aEv4vZV>)

Righteousness of Man in Modern Times

Ideologies of Seven Men in Retrospect

Charles Darwin (1809–1882) – Theory of Evolution

- Core Idea: Darwin's theory of natural selection and evolution challenged the biblical account of creation, suggesting that life developed through random processes over millions of years.
- Persistence: The theory of evolution has deeply influenced science, education, and secular thought. It underpins modern biology and has contributed to the decline of biblical literalism and the rise of atheism or agnosticism.

Karl Marx (1818–1883) – Communism and Marxism

- Core Idea: Marx's philosophy of dialectical materialism argued that class struggle is the driving force of history, advocating for the overthrow of capitalist systems and the establishment of a classless, communist society.
- Persistence: Marxist ideologies have influenced socialist and communist movements worldwide, including revolutions in Russia, China, and other nations. Marx's ideas persist in academic, political, and social justice movements, often framed as critiques of capitalism and economic inequality.

Righteousness of Man in Modern Times

Ideologies of Seven Men in Retrospect

Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) – Higher Criticism

- Core Idea: Wellhausen promoted the documentary hypothesis, which questioned the divine inspiration and traditional authorship of the Bible, particularly the Pentateuch.
- Persistence: His critical approach has influenced modern theology and biblical studies, leading many to view the Bible as a human document rather than divinely inspired, which has contributed to the erosion of scriptural authority in some religious circles.

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) – Psychoanalysis

- Core Idea: Freud developed theories about the unconscious mind, emphasizing the role of sexual and aggressive drives in human behavior. He also viewed religion as an illusion stemming from psychological needs.
- Persistence: Freud's ideas shaped modern psychology, psychiatry, and popular culture. His views on religion contributed to the secularization of thought, and his focus on self and personal fulfillment is a hallmark of modern individualism.

Righteousness of Man in Modern Times

Ideologies of Seven Men in Retrospect

John Dewey (1859–1952) – Progressive Education

- Core Idea: Dewey was a major proponent of pragmatism and progressive education, emphasizing experiential learning over rote memorization and promoting a secular, humanistic approach to education.
- Persistence: Dewey's educational philosophy underpins much of modern education, promoting critical thinking and relativism while sidelining religious and moral absolutes. His influence has led to a focus on social change and personal development in schools.

John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) – Keynesian Economics

- Core Idea: Keynes argued for government intervention in the economy through fiscal and monetary policies to mitigate economic downturns and stimulate growth.
- Persistence: Keynesian economics remains influential in modern economic policy. Governments worldwide use deficit spending and central banking practices to manage economies, especially during recessions.

Righteousness of Man in Modern Times

Ideologies of Seven Men in Retrospect

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) – Existentialism and Subjectivism

- Core Idea: Kierkegaard emphasized individual experience, subjectivity, and the "leap of faith" in religious belief, laying groundwork for existentialist thought.
- Persistence: His ideas have influenced existentialist philosophers like Sartre and Heidegger, shaping modern thought on individualism, personal freedom, and the subjective nature of truth.

Righteousness of Man in Modern Times

How these Ideologies Persist

Education: Darwin's and Dewey's ideas dominate modern scientific and educational frameworks, steering them away from religious or traditional worldviews.

Politics and Economics: Marx and Keynes have shaped political and economic systems, influencing debates on capitalism, socialism, and government intervention.

Religion and Philosophy: Wellhausen, Freud, and Kierkegaard have shifted religious and philosophical paradigms, encouraging skepticism of religious authority, focus on the self, and subjective interpretations of truth.

Culture and Society: These men's ideas collectively contribute to a secular worldview that often challenges traditional Christian values, promoting relativism, humanism, and materialism.

Worldview Analysis

Identify the Idol

Charles Darwin (Evolution): The idol is natural processes—the belief that nature operates entirely on its own without divine intervention.

Karl Marx (Communism): The idol is materialism and class struggle—the idea that material conditions and economic systems explain all human history and behavior.

Julius Wellhausen (Higher Criticism): The idol is human reason and textual analysis—the belief that human scholarship can fully explain and critique divine revelation.

Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalysis): The idol is the unconscious mind—the idea that human behavior and belief in God are driven by hidden psychological forces.

John Dewey (Progressive Education): The idol is pragmatism and human progress—the belief that human improvement and learning through experience define truth.

John Maynard Keynes (Keynesian Economics): The idol is economic interventionism—the idea that human systems and governments can control economic outcomes.

Søren Kierkegaard (Existentialism): The idol is subjectivity and personal experience—the belief that individual experience is the highest authority in understanding truth.

Worldview Analysis

Identify the Idol's Reductionism

Charles Darwin (Evolution): Reduces life's complexity to random mutation and natural selection.

Karl Marx (Communism): Reduces human history and societal development to economic and class struggle.

Julius Wellhausen (Higher Criticism): Reduces divine revelation to literary constructs and human authorship.

Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalysis): Reduces human behavior and religion to psychological drives, especially sex and aggression.

John Dewey (Progressive Education): Reduces truth and morality to what works pragmatically in human experience.

John Maynard Keynes (Keynesian Economics): Reduces economic well-being to government control and policy intervention.

Søren Kierkegaard (Existentialism): Reduces truth to subjective personal experience.

Worldview Analysis

Test the Idol – Does it Contradict What We know about the World?

Charles Darwin (Evolution): Struggles to explain irreducible complexity in biology and the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record.

Karl Marx (Communism): Fails to account for the persistent flaws in human nature and the historical failure of communist regimes to produce equality or prosperity.

Julius Wellhausen (Higher Criticism): Dismisses the Bible's historical and archaeological evidence that supports its authenticity.

Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalysis): Cannot adequately explain moral responsibility and altruism, as human behavior often transcends base psychological drives.

John Dewey (Progressive Education): Ignores the need for absolute moral standards, especially in education and societal governance.

John Maynard Keynes (Keynesian Economics): Overlooks the long-term consequences of deficit spending and economic manipulation, such as inflation and debt crises.

Søren Kierkegaard (Existentialism): While acknowledging individual experience, it cannot provide a coherent foundation for universal truth and shared moral standards.

Worldview Analysis

Test the Idol – Does it Contradict Itself?

Charles Darwin (Evolution): The claim that life is the product of random processes undermines the trustworthiness of human reason, which is necessary for scientific inquiry.

Karl Marx (Communism): While promoting a classless society, communist regimes often establish a new oppressive elite, contradicting its stated goals.

Julius Wellhausen (Higher Criticism): Claims to be objective but applies subjective assumptions to dismiss supernatural elements in Scripture.

Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalysis): Critiques religious belief as an illusion while failing to recognize that psychoanalysis itself can function as a substitute "faith" system.

John Dewey (Progressive Education): Argues that truth is relative, yet insists on the absolute truth of pragmatism as a guiding principle.

John Maynard Keynes (Keynesian Economics): Promotes short-term fixes while ignoring the unsustainable long-term consequences of such policies.

Søren Kierkegaard (Existentialism): Elevates personal experience as the ultimate truth, yet relies on universal existential concepts to justify subjective faith.

Worldview Analysis

Replace the Idol – Make the Case for Christianity

Darwin (Origin of Life): Christianity affirms that life is created and sustained by an intelligent and loving Creator, offering a purposeful design to the universe.

Marx (Human Society): Christianity explains the tension between justice and oppression as the result of sin, while offering hope for redemption through Christ and a kingdom of righteousness.

Wellhausen (Divine Revelation): Christianity upholds the Bible as God's inspired and authoritative word, confirmed by historical, archaeological, and spiritual evidence.

Freud (Human Behavior): Christianity recognizes both the depth of human sin and the need for divine transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Dewey (Education and Progress): Christianity affirms that true knowledge and wisdom begin with the fear of the Lord and that human progress is only meaningful when aligned with God's moral law.

Keynes (Economic Stewardship): Christianity teaches stewardship, emphasizing generosity, responsibility, and trust in God's provision rather than reliance on human control.

Kierkegaard (Subjectivity and Truth): Christianity affirms personal faith while grounding it in the objective truth of God's existence, Christ's historical resurrection, and the universal moral law.

Resources

- Good Ideas from Questionable Christians and Outright Pagans: An Introduction to Key Thinkers and Philosophies – Steve Wilkins (<https://a.co/d/5rr4ZoS>)