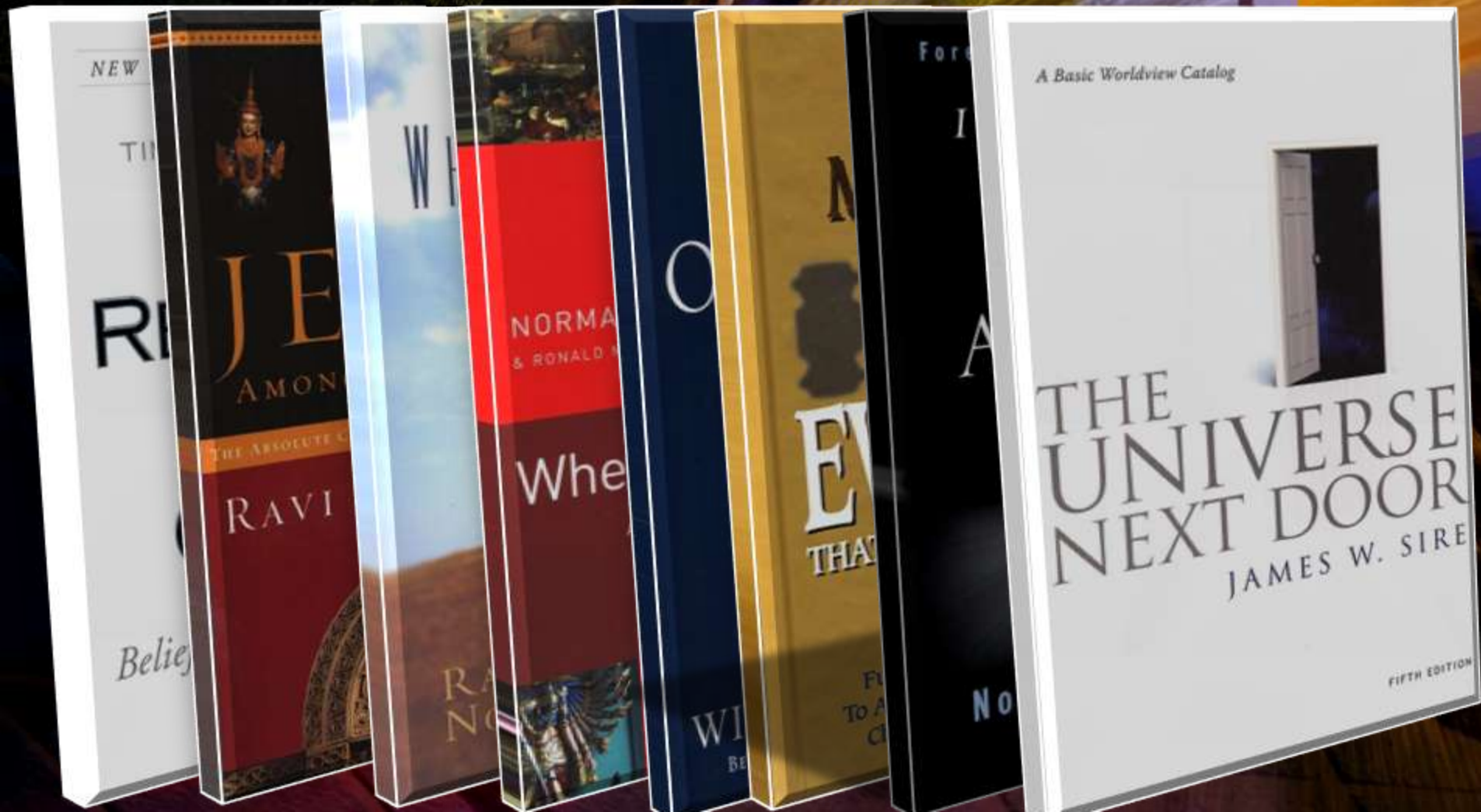


# APOLOGETICS 101:

## LESSON 3: WORLDVIEWS, PART 2



# ***Ravi's Four Key Questions:***

- 1. Origin –** **Where did I come from?**
- 2. Meaning –** **What is life's meaning?**
- 3. Morality -** **How do I define right from wrong?**
- 4. Destiny -** **What happens to me when I die?**

Worldview	Origin/Reality	Meaning/Value	Morality	Destiny
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<b>Christian Theism</b>	God	God's image	God's Law - moral absolutes	Eternity – Heaven or Hell
<b>Naturalism</b>	Matter exists eternally and is all there is.	Life has no ultimate meaning or value.	There are no moral absolutes.	Death is the extinction of personality and individuality
<b>Nihilism</b>	mechanistic universe	Life is meaningless	No "oughts"	Doesn't matter
<b>Existentialism</b>	Absurd universe	I create my own meaning or value	A social construct	The ultimate absurdity
<b>Postmodernism</b>	Reality is "socially constructed" through language	We are product of our social setting	Are social constructed	Death is the extinction of personality and individuality

The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features a grid of dark, semi-transparent squares overlaid on a background of blurred, radiating lines in various colors including green, yellow, orange, and blue. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and depth.

# *Eastern Pantheistic Monism*

*I am one with the cosmos*

# ***An Introduction to Pantheism***

***‘Pantheistic monism is distinguished from other related Eastern worldviews by its monism, the notion that only one impersonal element constitutes reality.’***

**- James Sire, p. 147**

There are a wide variety of pantheistic views; this view may not account for these. ***However, Eastern Pantheistic Monism is one of the most popular, pervasive and powerful philosophies within pantheism.***

## Worldview

## Origin/Reality

*"Where does life come from?"; "What is the nature of reality?"*

## Meaning/Value

*"How is life meaningful?"; "Do I have any value?"*

## Morality

*"Is there any real morality needed?"; "Is there an innate moral law?"*

## Destiny

*"What happens at death?"; "Is this life all there is?"*

## Pantheism

Hinduism;  
Buddhism

**Only the spiritual dimension exists.**

All else is illusion, *maya*. Spiritual reality, *Brahman*, is eternal, impersonal, and unknowable. It is possible to say that everything is a part of God, or that God is in everything and everyone.

**Life has no ultimate meaning or value.**

Man is one with ultimate reality. Thus man is spiritual, eternal, and impersonal. Man's belief that he is an individual is illusion.

**Because of Karma doing the right thing is important *even though***

***there are no moral absolutes.***

Because ultimate reality is impersonal, many pantheistic thinkers believe that there is no real distinction between good and evil. Instead, "unenlightened" behavior is that which fails to understand essential unity.

**Death is the end of individual, personal existence,**

but it changes nothing essential in an individual's nature. Karma and reincarnation occurs unless one has become enlightened and achieves salvation, that is, to realize one's union with the One/Cosmos.

# ***A Critique of Pantheism***

**Belief not Truth** - Eastern Pantheistic Monism teaches that there is no need for a belief to be consistent, or “true”, or “logical”; paradoxical truth is the norm.

**Oneness** with the Brahman/cosmos as the ultimate reality falters as one tries to find a satisfying way to live this out.

**Morality** is hard to find other than in inconsistent ways of living with the basic truths of unity without differentiation.

**Monism** is a hard sell in an obviously dualistic world unless you punt to the concept that the world is an illusion.

# ***A Critique of Pantheism***

**Impersonal** - The ultimate impersonal is also difficult in a world where personality and individuality are apparent.

**History** - Only this view sees history and cyclical and of course history is unimportant; experientially and scientifically the one thing we know about time is that it is linear. Discussion of its importance is another matter.

**Buddhism**, which is an offshoot of this worldview, holds several distinctions which, in my opinion, matters little as it does not redeem this system!

The background is a complex, abstract composition of overlapping, blurred lines and shapes in various colors including green, yellow, orange, red, and blue. The overall effect is one of motion and depth, with some elements appearing to radiate from a central point on the right side.

# *New Age Consciousness*

*I seek a higher consciousness*

# ***An Introduction to New Age***

*It is the ultimate form of spiritual humanism.  
It borrows from three other worldviews.*

**First, like *naturalism*** theirs is a closed universe. Their hope is that future evolution of man will bring about new beings.

**Second, somewhat like *pantheistic monism***, their new consciousness is mystical however it comes from experiences that transcend time, space and morality.

# ***An Introduction to New Age***

Unity with reality is seen, experienced and perceived, but it rejects reason as a guide.

**Third, it borrows heavily from *Spiritism* of pagan religions and the accompanying occultism; in which there is a Creator; a hierarchy of spiritual beings, both good and evil; spirit guides and witch doctors/shamans; and the unity of all life both spirit and matter.**

## Worldview

## Origin/Reality

*"Where does life come from?"; "What is the nature of reality?"*

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*"Is there any real morality needed?"; "Is there an innate moral law?"*

## Destiny

*"What happens at death?"; "Is this life all there is?"*

## New Age Conscious- ness

### *Naturalism*

### *Pantheism*

### *Spiritism*

Whatever the nature of being (idea or matter, energy or particle), **the self is the kingpin, the prime reality.** The cosmos, while unified in the self, is manifested in two more dimensions: the visible universe, accessible through ordinary consciousness, and the invisible universe (or Mind at Large), accessible through altered states of consciousness.

**The single self is the most important reality.** [Atman is Brahman where the emphasis is on the Atman.] As human beings grow in their awareness and grasp of this fact, the human race is on the verge of a radical change in human nature; even now we see harbingers of transformed humanity and prototypes of the New Age.

**There are no moral absolutes.** Because the cosmic consciousness transcends time space and morality.

**Physical death is not the end of the self;** under the experience of cosmic consciousness, the fear of death is removed.

# ***A Critique of the New Age***

***Self-deception*** - With the emphasis on self there is ‘...the danger of self-deception – theists and naturalists alike would add the *certainty* of self-deception – is the great weakness of the new consciousness at this point.’

***Subjective self*** - Another problem area relates to the cosmic consciousness, which is experienced by altered states of consciousness. Are they really transcending time and space or just experiencing their own vivid imaginations on an LSD trip? Indeed the core of this movement is the *subjective self* in which each person is an island universe among all others.

# ***A Critique of the New Age***

***Subjective self*** - New Agers quote the Buddha, Jesus and the Bible to bolster their claims but careful examination of these passages find that they are twisting the meaning, that is to say, they do not teach us what Jesus really meant. The New Age is always future; but is their more hope for optimism or pessimism as we look at the world around us? In their closed universe without God, who decides the ethics? In the new consciousness where demons reside and haunt the spirit realm this question arises: who protects them now that they have thrown off the shackles of Christian theism.

# ***A Critique of the New Age***

**Reality and Truth** - The third major problem "...is its understanding of the nature of reality and the nature of truth...there is no critique of anyone's ideas or of anyone's experience, and the experience is private... The issue is primary: either the self is god...or the self is not god and thus subject to the existence of things other than itself." Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, p. 212

***Subjectivity, self-delusion and systemic inconsistencies render New Age thinking useless for anything other than ego glorification.***

# *Spiritism*

*I must appease God & the spirits*

## Worldview

## Origin/Reality

*"Where does life come from?"; "What is the nature of reality?"*

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*"How is life meaningful?"; "Do I have any value?"*

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## Destiny

*"What happens at death?"; "Is this life all there is?"*

## Spiritism

animism;  
polytheism;  
Primitive religions

### Dualistic Universe

The world is populated by spirit beings who govern what goes on. Gods and demons are the real reason behind "natural" events. Material things are real, but they have spirits associated with them and, therefore, can be interpreted spiritually.

### Derived from their god

Man is a creation of the gods like the rest of the creatures on earth. Often, tribes or races have a special relationship with some gods who protect them and can punish them.

### From their god/religious authority

Moral values take the form of taboos, which are things that irritate or anger various spirits. These taboos are different from the idea of "good and evil" because it is just as important to avoid irritating evil spirits as it is good ones.

### "Spirit"

Ancestral worship and sacred burial places are common in animism. Spirits continue on in the afterlife, sometimes as spirit guides.

# ***A Critique of Spiritism***

**Spiritism**, the basis for most primitive religions, has these problems.

**Fear & Bondage** – Pleasing god or the gods and the spirits becomes a never ending struggle. What's taboo and what's not???

**Strong Man spirituality** – The Shaman & tradition are the source for understanding the ways to please the spirits.

**Mystic or occult practices** – Spirit guides and mystic experiences become ways to seek guidance but subjectivity really leads the way.

# *Deism*

*I am a cog in the  
Watchmaker's universe*

<b>Worldview</b>	<b>Origin/Reality</b>	<b>Meaning/Value</b>	<b>Morality</b>	<b>Destiny</b>
	<i>"Where does life come from?"; What is the nature of reality?"</i>	<i>"How is life meaningful?"; "Do I have any value?"</i>	<i>"Is there any real morality needed?"; "Is there an innate moral law?"</i>	<i>"What happens at death?"; "Is this life all there is?"</i>

<b>Deism</b>	<b>'Watchmaker' God</b>	<b>Personal creatures</b>	<b>Natural Law</b>	<b>Maybe Heaven?</b>
<i>'Moral Therapeutic Deism' (America's folk religion)</i>	<i>A transcendent God, as a First Cause, created the universe but then left it to run on its own. God is thus not immanent, not triune, not fully personal, not sovereign over human affairs, not providential. The cosmos God created is determined, because it is created as a uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system; no miracle is possible.</i>	<i>Human beings, though personal, are a part of the clockwork of the universe.</i>	<i>Ethics is intuitive or limited to general revelation; because the universe is normal, it reveals what is right. 'Warm' deists may follow the moral teachings of the Bible.</i>	<i>Human beings may or may not have a life beyond their physical existence. 'Warm' deists believe that heaven awaits 'good' people.</i>

# ***A Critique of Deism***

**Deism** is the view that an impersonal God exists.

**Autonomous human reason** replaces the bible (God's revealed absolute truth) as the epistemological and moral authority.

**Creation** is a closed system in Deism; this means that the world we live in is normal and the universe is determined.

**Clockmaker world?** - This idea has fallen into disrepute among scientists who see the universe as irreducibly complex.

# ***Moral Therapeutic Deism***

1. "A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth."
2. "God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions."
3. "The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself."
4. "God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem."
5. "Good people go to heaven when they die."

# *Islamic Theism*

*'There is none worthy of  
worship except God and  
Muhammad is the messenger  
of God'*

## Worldview

## Origin/Reality

*"Where does life come from?"; What is the nature of reality?"*

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## Islamic Theism

*Allah - God (Allah), described a monotheistic, infinite, personal, transcendent, immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good. Of these attributes Islam emphasizes his oneness, transcendence and sovereignty. God (Allah) created the universe ex nihilo. The world is a closed system ; divine decrees.*

**God's greatest creation**  
*Human beings are the pinnacle of God's creation. They have been given abilities of which other creatures, such as angels and jinn, are not capable.*

**Qur'an**  
*Right and wrong are based on the teachings of the Qur'an, as amplified by the Hadith and interpreted by the schools of the law, the shari'a. Mankind's high standing brings with it the responsibility to live up to God's standards.*

**Eternity**  
*Death is a time of transition between this life and our eternal state, which will consist of either paradise or hell.*

# ***A Critique of Islam***

**Too Deterministic** - Islam's emphasis on the greatness of God (above everything) is primary. As Creator and owner of the universe nothing happens outside of his plan. We were made to live a life of obedience and our future state literally depends on it.

***“Islamic theism...is ultimately a closed system that puts humans in a bind between personal accountability and divine determinism.” Sire, p. 273***

# ***A Critique of Islam***

**A Works Religion** - Despite its theistic perspective Islam ultimately fails to do what it claims to do. Many Muslims are lost in legalism, superstition and ignorance. Trying to work your way to heaven without assurance in this life leads to apathy on the one hand and desperation on the other.

# *Validating Worldviews*

**1. Coherence** – *It should have an inner intellectual coherence.*

**2. Comprehensive** – *It must be able to comprehend the data of reality;*

**3. Complete** – *It must be able to explain what it claims to explain;*

**4. Subjectively Satisfying** – *It should be able to ring true in our hearts*



## **Worldview**

## **Origin/Reality**

*"Where does life come from?"; What is the nature of reality?"*

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## **Christian Theism**

### **God**

*God is infinite and personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good. God created the cosmos ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.*

### **God's image**

*Human beings are created in the image of God and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness and creativity.*

### **God's Law**

*Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being. Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).*

### **Eternity – Heaven or Hell**

*For each person death is either the gate to life with God and his people or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill human aspirations.*

# *The Examined life*

A Basic Worldview Catalog



THE  
UNIVERSE  
NEXT DOOR  
JAMES W. SIRE

FIFTH EDITION

*“To be a Christian theist is not just to have an intellectual worldview; it is to be personally committed to the infinite-personal Lord of the Universe. And it leads to an examined life well worth living.”*

Sire, p. 286

# APOLOGETICS 101:

## LESSON 3: WORLDVIEWS, PART 2

