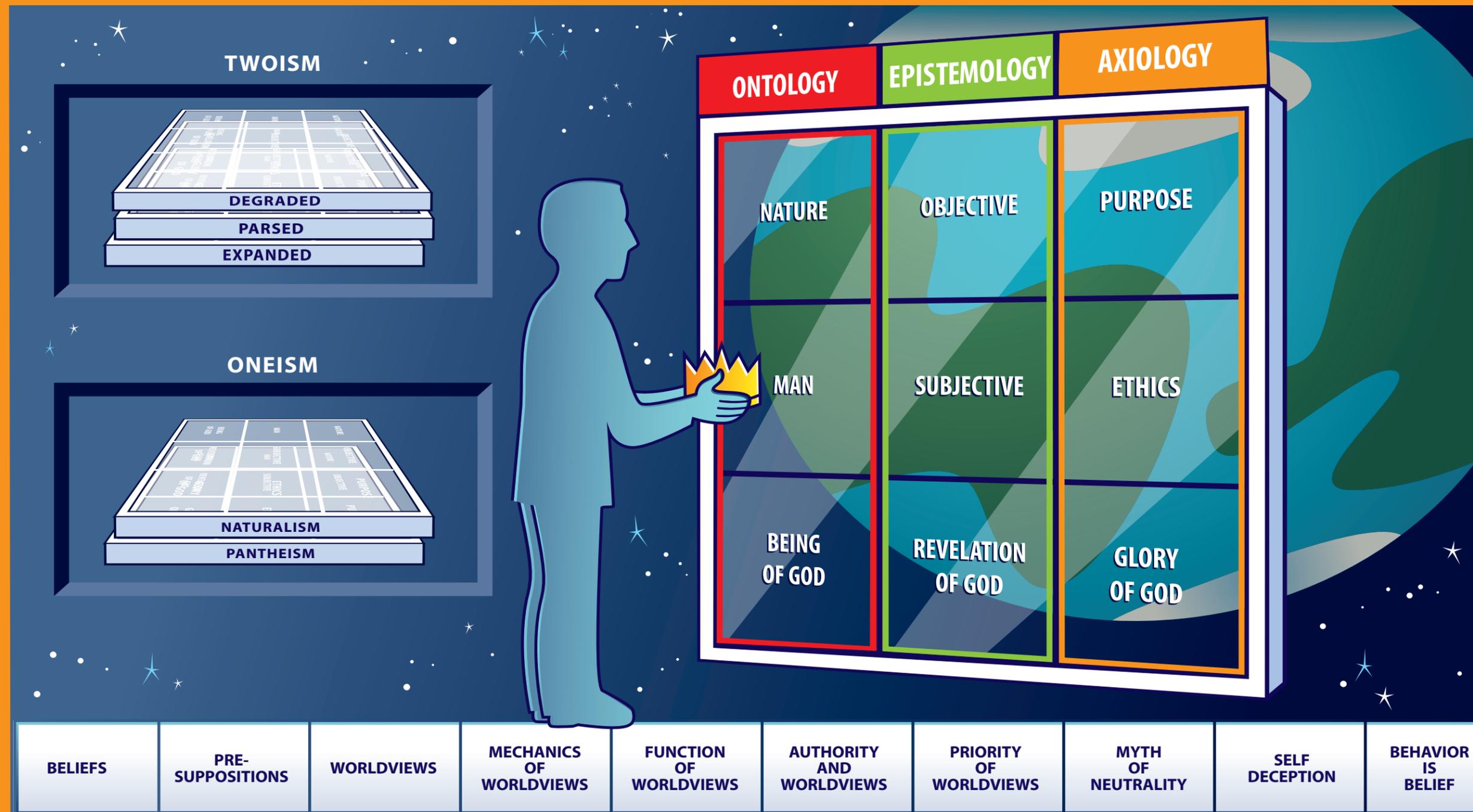


WHAT EXISTS? ONTOLOGY

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT? EPISTEMOLOGY

SO WHAT? AXIOLOGY



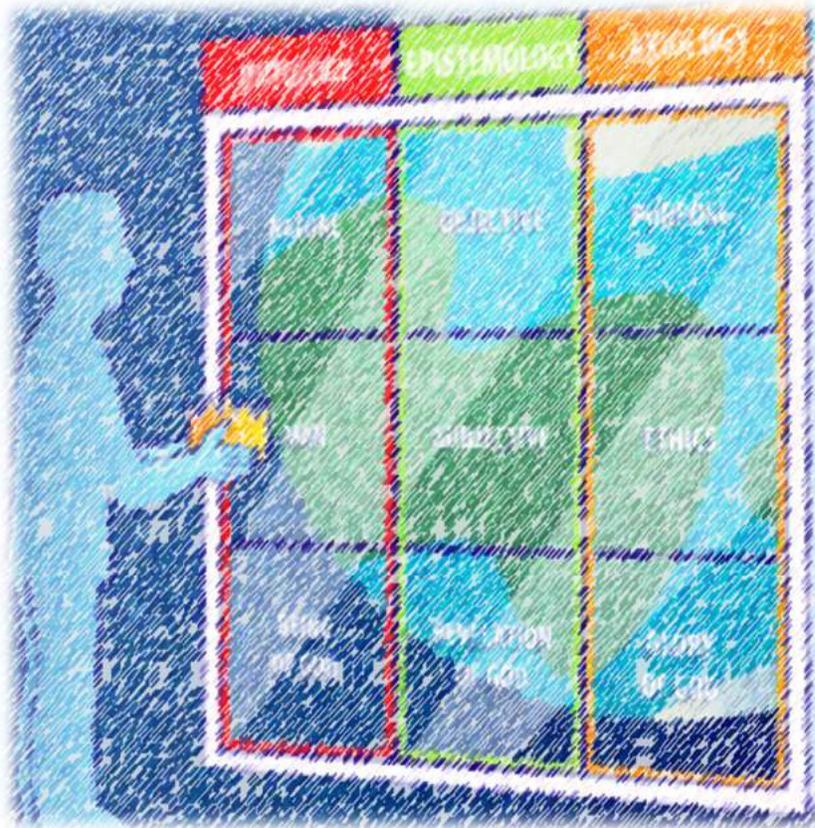
NATURE: created/eternal material/immaterial/both
OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE: Absolute Truth belief vs. knowledge
PURPOSE: Teleology-does nature have a purpose, where does it come from
Empiricism: go out and look
Rationalism: sit down and think
SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE: look within (intuition-conscience)
inherent, discoverable order/evolving unity/diversity/both

Values: discovered/prescribed **GLORY OF GOD:** summum bonum
REVELATION: General: nature Special: Jesus Christ/the Bible
GOD: absolute/fnite personal/impersonal
moral/non-moral language

WORLDVIEWS

Looking from the Top Down

Taught by Dan Dodds



Student Notes - Lesson 1

Student Notes - Lesson 1 (cont.)

Justifications/Authorities	Affirmed in Scripture	Limited by Scripture
<p>Hand (senses)</p>	<p>John 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand <i>here</i>, and put <i>it</i> into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."</p>	<p>John 20:28-31 ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. <u>Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.</u>" ³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but <u>these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luke 16.19-31 (esp. 27-31) – Rich man and Lazarus - 2 Peter 2.18-19 “we have something more sure”
<p>Head (mind)</p>	<p>Isaiah 1:18 " Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool." - 1 Cor. 15.12-19</p>	<p>Proverbs 3:5-7 ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, <u>And lean not on your own understanding;</u> ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. ⁷ <u>Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD</u> and depart from evil.</p>
<p>Heart (feelings)</p>	<p>Romans 2:14-15 ¹⁴ for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves <i>their</i> thoughts accusing or else excusing <i>them</i>)</p>	<p>Ezekiel 13:6-7 ⁶ "They <u>have envisioned futility and false divination,</u> saying, 'Thus says the LORD!' But the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. ⁷ "Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD says,' but I have not spoken." Proverbs 28:26 ²⁶ <u>He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,</u> But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.</p>

Student Notes – Lessons 2- 3

I. Beliefs

- a. Definition – an acceptance of a proposition to be true.
- b. (1) Beliefs have tremendous power
- c. (2) Beliefs have consequences
- d. (3) Beliefs can be wrong
- e. (4) Beliefs can be used to deceive ourselves about other beliefs
- f. (5) Beliefs are hierarchical

II. Presuppositions

- a. Definition - an elementary assumption in one's reasoning or in the process by which opinions are formed.
- b. (1) Presuppositions are foundational beliefs
- c. (2) Presuppositions resist change
- d. (3) Presuppositions are often hidden

III. Worldviews

- a. Definition: A worldview is "a **set of presuppositions** (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or habitually, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world." (modified James Sire The Universe Next Door)
- b. Worldviews attempt to answer three related questions
 - i. What exists? (Ontology)
 - ii. How do I know that? (Epistemology)
 - iii. So what? (Axiology)
- c. Christianity is a worldview

IV. Mechanics of Worldviews

- a. (1) Worldviews are systems
- b. (2) Worldviews are irreducibly complex
 - i. "A single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the **basic** function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning" Behe
- c. (3) Worldviews (like presuppositions) are Immune to Revision

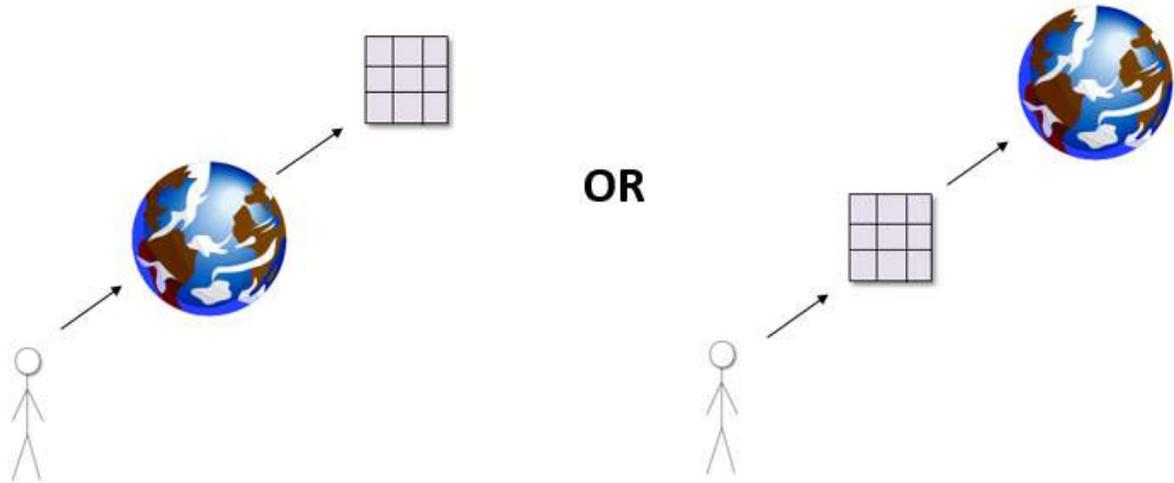
V. Function of Worldviews

- a. (1) Organize
 - i. Filter
 - ii. Sort
- b. (2) Rank
- c. (3) Prescribe

VI. Authority of Worldviews

- a. Definition: The intrinsic, assumed or delegated right to create, categorize, command and coerce (i.e. exercise dominion) backed by the commensurate power to do so, whether or not recognized or willfully submitted to by others

VII. Priority of Worldviews



- a. What we learn from experience depends on the kind of philosophy we bring to experience. It is therefore useless to appeal to experience before we have settled, as well as we can, the philosophical question. (C.S. Lewis, Miracles, p.3)

VIII. Myth of Neutrality

IX. Self-Deception

X. Behavior is Belief

XI. Objective Truth

XII. Methodology

Rethinking Milk Buying

by Douglas Jones

Originally appeared in Credenda/Agenda (Vol. 7; No. 1)

Imagine that you are mistaken about everything you hold dear. Suppose you wake up one morning and clearly realize that your long-held, day-to-day views of nature, social values, and self are obviously mistaken. Common things you have seen for years take on a whole new light. The world hasn't changed, but different things stand out in odd ways. Things you once adored are now utterly disgusting. Things you once hated now command your deepest loyalty. You can now see through your motives and rationalizations in a way hidden before. How could you have been so naive?

Could one really be so radically deceived about the world after all these years? We may not often think about it, but most people do in fact assume that millions of others are out to lunch in just this way. For example, probably much of the world believes that millions of zealous Muslims are seriously disconnected from reality. And millions of third world animists, slavishly trying to balance numerous life forces in trees and rocks and heads, fare no better on reality checks. Even gaping postmodernist types who pretend to deny any single reality or truth are usually the first to insist that the vast millions of us who believe in truth are terribly mistaken about the world.

Some can easily write off "fanatics," but why can't a more mundane, common-sensical, middle-of-the-road view be equally deceived about the world? After all, most people with "sane," moderate views acquired those views in the same way that most "fanatics" acquired theirs -- living in a community where those views seem obvious. Fanatics don't usually look like fanatics within their own communities. There, they appear rather mundane and average. To them, you are the fanatic, wildly at odds with reality.

You, like most people, hold the beliefs you do because you picked them up along the way from people you trusted: parents, friends, media, maybe even from some zealous college instructor. But over millennia, many parents and zealous college instructors have proven themselves terribly mistaken. Maybe you too have fallen for subtle lies? Real deception never looks strange when you're on the inside.

The kind of deception I'm suggesting isn't the rather unbelievable sort, like being mistaken about whether your left thumb is really an African elephant. The more interesting and plausible kind of radical deception involves less obvious, even invisible things, like moral standards and rules of reasoning and assumptions about how the world works. If you are wrong about these sorts of things, then you could be radically mistaken but go along with the flow of life in the short term without running into any corners. You might only recognize your horrible mistake in the long run, when it all starts to fall apart. Then it could be dangerously late.

Now add to all this the fact that your years on earth have really been very few. And the time anyone spends thinking about the world is relatively minute compared to all that there is to understand. Given all this, then, isn't it even likely that you are indeed radically deceived about the world? Considering how easily and how many people are deceived, it doesn't seem that wild of a conjecture to suspect that you too are radically deceived.

In fact, your actions often reveal more about your likely deception than your words. For example, whenever you do something like go to a grocery store to buy milk, you reveal many things about yourself. When you first walk up to the grocery store, you assume that you and the store are two different things, not one, thus showing your rejection of most Eastern and New Age religions. When you walk down that same dairy aisle and select the same kind of milk, you assume that the world is not chaotic, but orderly, regular, and divided into set kinds of things. When you stand in line with others, expecting others to respect your space and person, you reveal your rejection of moral relativism and your deep trust in absolute ethical norms. When you calculate your available change, compare the price of the milk, and make the exchange with the clerk at the register, you engage in a complex array of thought processes involving nonmaterial rules of reasoning, thus showing your rejection of materialism and evolution.

In short, when you do something as mundane as buying milk, you accept and reject all sorts of views. You act like you reject many popular religions and scientific claims. In fact, given the sum of what you assume and reject just when buying milk, you act like you believe that you live in the world described by Christianity. The world depicted above suggests complexities and contours of reality that are only supplied in Christianity. Now, you may openly reject Christianity, but you certainly act like it is true and that your non-Christianity is false. Why such self-deception? Why don't you just confess what you appear to assume?

Non-Christian thought has no cogent answer for such evident and world-encompassing self-deception, but Christianity does. The Christian Scripture explains that the world is in an abnormal state, due to the destructiveness of our sin. We have rebelled against a holy and gracious God, and so we try to make up grand scenarios in order to evade Him. Such evasion isn't a marginal error. It is concerted warfare against our Creator, and it deserves divine capital punishment. Or, you can pray to embrace the mercy found in Christ, the God-given substitute sent to take our punishment so that we can be reconciled to God. That's the heart of Christianity -- peace with God, with no more radical self deception about the world.

Could you be radically mistaken in your non-Christian outlook? It certainly looks likely. You profess non-Christianity, but assume Christianity. Think about Christ's work the next time you go to buy some milk.

An Example of an Apologetic Encounter

Dan Dodds

Tom: I think the Bible is just a fairy tale, it's a joke.

Chris: Interesting. Well, an accusation implies a standard. Let me ask you, the standard that you are employing to make this critique, is it a *personal* standard or a *universal* standard?

Tom: What do you mean, what difference does it make?

Chris: It makes all the difference in the world. If it is a *personal* standard then when you make comments about the Bible you are merely making a statement of personal preference. It would be the same as saying "I don't like peas." And that is mildly interesting but not of any real significance. On the other hand, if you are using a *universal* standard then I'd like to ask 1) How you know that there *is* a universal standard, 2) What that standard is, 3) Where the *universal* standard came from – from within you or outside of you? and 4) How you justify it as a universal standard?

Tom: Huh? I don't understand that.

Chris: Think of it this way. We go through life using numerous standards, weights and measures, rules, laws etc. Now some of these are not so significant as long as we're consistent. We can use an American yard stick to build a house or we can use the metric system. As long as we're consistent (using one or the other) when we build the house, we should be fine. But when it comes to laws such as the laws of science, logic or morality it is not so easy. Let's take the laws of logic. If the laws of logic are not invariant (unchanging), objective (public, not private laws) and universal (apply all the time, everywhere) then they are not trustworthy. If all the laws of mathematics (formal logic) can change in the next five minutes, what good are they? Imagine if they only applied in Florida but not in Iowa, or only on Tuesdays but not Wednesdays. When it comes to truth claims about reality, knowledge or purpose, if you do not have a *universal* standard to which to appeal then it all comes down to preferences.

Tom: Why can't we just make observations about the world and assume they are universal until they are proven wrong?

Chris: That's a good question but even induction (arguing from experience) requires universal laws (uniformity). So you would have to assume a universal law (uniformity) to derive universal laws (about logic for example) This is a little complicated, but just know that to when you make observations you are bringing many presuppositions to them that you have not proven, just assumed. This is begging the question. In regards to your original comment it would look like this: "Let's assume the Bible is a myth. Now, given that assumption, I conclude that the Bible is a myth." I don't know about you but I am not impressed with that argument.

Tom: But why can't we all just agree on what the laws are?

Chris: In philosophy that is called making laws by ‘convention,’ kind of like a majority vote. That is okay when it comes to using red as the color for a stop light or for assigning fines for a parking ticket. But when it comes to the most fundamental issues of reality, knowledge and purpose, it doesn’t work. The majority can be wrong. I just read an article, for example, that demonstrates that whenever the majority of investors get out of the market (because of a fear it is about to crash) it is a sign that the market is about to go up. Conversely, if they all fully invest themselves in the market you can bet it’s about to go down. In fact, in the last three major turning points in the market, the investment community was *always* wrong. So much for the majority. Now given that the majority can be (and often is) wrong just in investments, how can we rely on laws about reality that are agreed upon by them? That is not just shaky ground, it is quicksand.

Tom: Okay, okay. I can see that if we want to make sense of anything we have to have universal standards, but how do we get them?

Chris: I am glad you asked. You see, there is only one worldview that can account for universal standards of science, logic and morality. There is only one worldview that can account for laws that are unchanging objective and universal – and that is the Christian worldview. The Bible is a revelation of God. It tells us that God is infinite, all-knowing and all powerful. It reveals that God is personal, not just a force. He is not just *really* powerful, but the source of all power. In fact, Christianity is the only worldview (outside of cults or counterfeit or modified Christianity) in which there is a God who is both omnipotent and personal. Because God is unchanging and infinite, because He is not a figment of our imagination (subjective), He can reveal things about His creation that we can count on and that we can know to be true. Also, because God has these attributes (He is unchanging, infinite), we should not be at all surprised that His creation includes laws that reflect His character. In fact, it is *because* His creation has these qualities that we can make sense of it. On the other hand, if the universe is ultimately based upon random movements of molecules, any order we see can only be understood as a really amazing coincidence.

Tom: Man, that’s heavy stuff. But it still sounds like *you* are begging the question yourself. You are saying that the Bible is true because it gives you what you want, it gives you the ability to make sense of things. But maybe nothing does make sense, maybe everything is meaningless.

Chris: Well, the problem Tom is that to make such a statement is self-contradictory isn’t it? Is “everything is meaningless” a meaningful statement? You can see the problem. Now my point is merely this: If you want to make statements about truth or reality that are meaningful, the only place where you will find the *stuff* to make such an argument is within Christianity. In fact, if you want to criticize Christianity meaningfully, you will have to first assume that what it says is true. One Christian wrote that even an atheist has to sit in God’s lap to slap Him. You cannot function in God’s world without using His stuff. The problem is that men have suppressed the truth of God and have traded the truth for lies (Romans 1). It also teaches us that men do not give God thanks or glory for who He is or what He has done.

Tom: So, what's wrong with that?

Chris: It shows that the real problem with men is a *moral* problem. When they say they can't believe in Christianity it is not a confession of intellectual doubt, but a revelation of moral rebellion. If men are to make sense of their world it will only happen when they begin by bending their knees before their Creator. Anything less is intellectual suicide.

Tom: But wait a minute. I know lots of people who are not Christians who can count, who love their kids and are really smart.

Chris: Oh, well don't get me wrong. Of course they act like they act like the laws of logic and science are universal. Of course people count. They just can't *account* for their counting.

Tom: What does that mean?

Chris: If anyone believes that the universe is an accidental result of a random processes then they will not be able to square that with universal and unchanging entities such as laws of logic.

Tom: Well, maybe they don't have to. As long as we get what we need, what difference does it make?

Chris: To announce pragmatism is not justify it. And such a worldview would lead only to the survival of the fittest.

Tom: Well, isn't that what evolution is about?

Chris: Yes, in fact it is. And it sounds so nice in a classroom. But when it comes to the street you'll find it repugnant. Just remind yourself of the beauty of evolution the next time a 250 pound brute takes your wallet. You won't say, "well, there's that evolution just happening again." In fact, what will happen is that you will claim "that is wrong!!" demonstrating what I have argued all along. You *do* know that there are universal standards of logic, science and morality, in fact you run to them when life gets hard; but you can't account for them nor will you acknowledge their Source.

Tom: Hey, all I was saying was that I thought the Bible was a myth!

Chris: And all I hope that you see that to believe anything *other* than the Bible is to believe a myth. The Bible tells us that unbelievers find a refuge in lies, I hope that you will think about what we have discussed today and come to see the Bible for what it is, God's revelation to His people. I'd be happy to help you with it.