

WORLDVIEW

THE ADVENTURE OF SEEING
THROUGH SCRIPTURE



RANDY BAKER

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Worldview: The Adventure of Seeing Through Scripture

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Note: for further teaching see my blog wisdomfromtheword.ca

Cover Illustration:

The horse is Adventure and represents the journey we are on.

The brown colour illustrates humility, and the dove represents following the Holy Spirit in our journey.

01.03.22



Dedication

- I dedicate this primarily to Jesus as I seek to honor Him through understanding how to better represent (Re Present) Him.
- To my wife Carol for her support through all of my studies and our decades of marriage.
- My friend Wouter for his encouragement and editorial challenges that made me a better writer.
Wouter faithfully reflects Proverbs 27:6.



Author: A favourite spot – Deep in the backcountry in the mountains, or anywhere outdoors. Yes, there is no hair under the hat – hence the hat in the sun!

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INTRODUCTION

In 2020 I completed and defended my Doctoral Dissertation writing about worldviews, more specifically a scriptural worldview. I examined the factors that shape and shift our worldviews as research demonstrated that few of us in the church actually hold a scriptural worldview, which is a significant factor in how we represent Jesus to others. In this book my goal is to practically present what a worldview is, some history, some of the challenges in the worldview of the church and then provide tools to examine our own worldview and ideally align it with the worldview of scripture.

The reality is that whether examined or unexamined, we all hold a worldview that affects how we live our lives and as Christians our worldview needs to be a scriptural one to be effective in furthering His kingdom. To that end the following chapter headings are what I will cover;

- Clarifying Worldview
- Why our Worldview is Important
- The Worldview Issue in the Church
- A Scriptural Worldview Defined
- Aligning Beliefs with Behaviour
- Changing our Worldview
- The View from Scripture
- Scriptural Truths to Shape and Strengthen our Worldview
- Conclusion.

The cover illustration has a twofold purpose. The first is to capture the spirit of adventure and exploration. We need to be those who embrace the journey deeper into His heart and purposes. Secondly, in March 2016 a friend shared an open vision she had of me riding a large horse and being about the Father's business. Some time later my friend asked what the name of the horse was and when I sought the Lord about it, I felt I was to call him Adventure. Hence the picture on the cover and the inclusion in the title. The original vision was very detailed but also very personal. A few months after this vision was shared with me I was in a church six hundred kilometres away. During the worship service a lady came up to me and said she could see in the spirit realm a large horse behind me with a knight seated upon the horse. I share these experiences by way of explanation. I believe this was a vision confirmed by others and that it was in part the impetus for writing this book.

I experience the Holy Spirit as a person not a theory. As a part of the Godhead, He wants to be actively involved in our lives. That is a major plank in the platform of my worldview.

I had a dear friend Evelyn who taught me a great deal about discernment. She stepped from time into eternity December 10, 2016 after walking with Jesus for 80 years. I met her in February of 1991 when she had just turned 65 and she began to pray for me daily from that day forward. I didn't know about the daily prayer until I got to know her better. She lived in another community and I used to speak with her on the phone. Her habit, rather than asking me how I was doing, was to tell me how I was doing. She knew how I was doing based on what she was experiencing in praying for me. Her unwavering accuracy led to increasingly desire for discernment in my own life, which I pursued.

A brief note on references and footnotes. I have included footnotes and a bibliography for those who are interested. My exception to footnotes is scripture.

Rather than putting references from scripture in a footnote I will include the references and verses in the quotation so that they stand out and are easier to find.

As part of the introduction, I thought it important to share something of my journey to Christianity.

Church Background and the Search

I was raised attending church, which meant going to Sunday school regularly, the occasional service and being in the Christmas play. I stopped attending church at age 14 and from then until 20 probably darkened a church door 2-3 times for special events. Part of me always wanted something experiential and meaningful and at that point I wasn't finding it in the church.

In Jr. High I found out I was good at sports and it was really playing sports that kept me in High School and led to my eventual graduation. I struggled academically and missed a lot of classes in grades 11 and 12 because I drank a lot and was involved in some drug use.

With my athletic background in February 1980 at age 20 I took up running. I was living and working in Northern Alberta in small towns. After work the options were the bar, watch TV in your hotel room or find something else. My co-worker was a former runner who wanted to get back into running so we started running at -20 in February in Northern Alberta. This time period was the beginning of a process of reflection and transition for me, though the process took years to complete. In high school I spent many a night drinking too much and discussing 'life' with the friends I was drinking with. I was looking for something and was not sure what it was. At this point I used to party most Friday and Saturday evenings but once I started running, the morning after drinking I would get up and go for a run until I felt better, not a strategy I would recommend!

Two friends rented a place with me and I was the guy who organized the shopping and cleaning. A tip, don't go grocery shopping with two stoned roommates, you spend a lot of time taking things out of the cart!

One Saturday morning after a party I was sitting in the living room thinking about the chores I needed to do and realized an hour or so later that I was still sitting there and doing nothing. So, I kept running and quit drinking. I had also just taken up karate at this point. Just after I turned 20, I told my two friends and roommates, who were very regularly stoned, that I would like to go to bible school sometime. They were both shocked and amused but I recognized something was stirring in my heart.

That summer I moved from Peace River to Edmonton to attend MacEwan Community College (now MacEwan University). Having shifted from partying I searched for meaning more earnestly and pursued a variety of belief systems.

When I first moved to Edmonton I stayed with my sister and brother in-law for the summer and went to church with them off and on. Church didn't stick and after examining a number of belief systems I eventually embraced a new age type philosophy that included the idea that we create our own reality.

Cancer and Marriage 1983

On Monday May 16, 1983 I had a medical appointment. I was to get married that Saturday the 21st, however I had a medical issue that wasn't responding to treatment so the Dr. had referred me to a specialist. I saw him that day. It was a short appointment and when I asked him what he thought I had he said, "I think you have cancer." I tend to become quite rational in crises so I said, "How sure are you? His response was "85-90%." That sort of shifted my focus a bit from my wedding and the Dr. was right, I did have cancer. I was admitted to the hospital the next day, Tuesday, had my first surgery Thursday, I was discharged from

the hospital on Saturday at noon (my request) and was married later that afternoon. This wasn't a good way to start a marriage and Carol, my wife, has often said there has been nothing normal about our marriage. It has however worked well now for nearly four decades.

At this point under the belief system I had adopted, I knew I hadn't created this reality so I wisely abandoned that way of thinking.

I had major surgery a few weeks later and the Dr. discovered a tumour the size of a grapefruit around my aorta, my lymph nodes in my abdomen were a cancerous mass. As a result, part of my immune system is gone and as a memento, I have a very long scar from my sternum to about three inches below my navel.

Medical tip here. When you have discharged yourself from the hospital early don't remove your sutures in the middle of the night while your wife is sleeping because you think they are too tight! Yes, I did that! Thankfully my abdomen never split open. I would have died without the surgery as my aorta would have ruptured. The interesting part is that all the medical tests, including a CT scan, had not identified the tumour. My surgery was supposed to be a precautionary measure to keep the cancer from spreading to my lymph nodes. It was a bit late for that!

In the Fall of 1983, I then went through four rounds of chemotherapy. This part of my life was where a search for meaning intensified. During my first chemo session I had a paranoid reaction to the artificial marijuana, likely connected to my earlier drug use from ages 16-20. At this point I remember being both afraid to live and afraid to die. Every minute seemed like it was an hour long and I spent most of that first evening on chemo curled up in a fetal position, until the vomiting started, that required a bit of movement! Through this I abandoned my previous worldview (not knowing the term at the time) and began a search in earnest.

As part of my search, I began to seriously examine the scriptures and I read the bible from Genesis to Revelation in 6 weeks between chemotherapy sessions. I also talked to a couple of pastors during the process and had quite a number of people praying for me. At this point I was open but not committed to Christ. There is a lot of cancer history in my family and I am the only person in my family who has had cancer and survived.

Once I was through the cancer I was still back and forth about Christianity and though I attended church on and off I was still unsure about life.

Conversion in August 1985

It was when I was no longer concerned about cancer but still sorting out meaning that I concluded after a lot of reading and reflection, I was very logic based, that Christianity was the only belief system that truly made sense. At this point I truly surrendered my heart and life to Jesus. There were no great flashing lights or other surreal experiences, just a settled conviction that this was right. The date was August 18, 1985. I only know the date because after I made the decision, I phoned a man who had invested in my life and helped me in my reflective process. He thanked me for the gift because it was his birthday. The man was Professor Siegfried Schaible (August 18, 1940 – September 7, 2014). During the time we shared he was teaching applied Mathematics at U of A. He was from Germany and had doctorates in both physics and math and was a deeply committed Christian and internationally sought out for his academic knowledge. He rigorously applied his intellect to his faith. I share this because many seem to think that a belief in Jesus requires faith in opposition to science and reason. Nothing could be further from the truth and Siegfried was a great example of that. In addition to his academic credentials, after he left Edmonton and moved to California to teach, he was elected

a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1998.

Having said all of that, to this day I still struggle with some things in scripture but I have enough humility to recognize that my intellect and reasoning are not God's. In spite of that I completely trust Him and have a deep confidence that when we appear before the Just Judge in eternity that I can trust in what Abraham said about 4,000 years ago – *“Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?”*¹

I look back on my time battling cancer and my journey to Jesus with thankfulness. I never enjoyed going through cancer but I deeply appreciate that I went through it because it eventually brought me to faith, not a faith in a belief system but faith in Jesus, the Living Risen one whom I know.

My reason for writing this book is the glaring need that I see regarding how our worldview shapes our behaviour and decision making and the issue with a lack of scriptural worldview. I will highlight this with research and statistics. Personally, I am part of the broader Evangelical community, which encompasses a range from very conservative believers to what a friend has described as ‘deep blue Charismatics’. Theologically I embrace the scriptural teaching on the need to be born again and develop a relationship with Jesus. Thus, my primary audience for this book is the broader Evangelical community, though any of us stand to benefit from a better understanding of worldviews in general and ours in particular. As we engage in looking at worldview and the goal of possessing a scriptural one, I ask you to reflect on two things. One, what would your life look like with a worldview aligned to the truths of scripture? Take some time and reflect on it. Two, what things stand in your way? Do you need to change how you prioritize your time? Do you need to spend more time in scripture or more time in a study of what the scriptures teach? We will come back to this later.

¹ Genesis 18:25 latter part NKJV

CLARIFYING WORLDVIEW

All our knowledge has its origins in our perceptions.

Leonardo da Vinci

As is obvious from my introduction, I accept God's existence as a given. Keeping God in view, it is important to consider how we see things. After all, how we see things is intricately connected to the mindset we bring to bear when looking. Whether we are casually looking at something or engaging in a deep examination, what we see naturally depends on how we look. In a journal note from August 5, 1851 Henry David Thoreau expressed it this way,



*“The question is not what you look at -
but how you look and whether you see.”*



In that vein, we have all likely had the experience of seeing a picture or verse of scripture, seemingly for the first time, then realizing it had been there all along. Something shifted in how we saw! What we saw didn't change, our view of it did. Given that we see is determined more by how we look than what is actually there then how we look depends on how our perspective has been shaped. To be clear, when I refer to perspective I am not writing as one who has 'arrived'. I embrace what Paul wrote,
¹² *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.* ¹³ *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,* ¹⁴ *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:12 NKJV

² <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191843730.001.0001/q-oro-ed5-00010905>