

W.E.C. 7 – Justification of Knowledge: A Bird’s Eye View

Justification of Knowledge

3. Conclusion - Truth / Fact



2. Method - Lens of Interpretation

Reason / sensory experience / faith / logic



1. Starting Point - Ultimate Authority (Presupposition)

The Materialist / Atheist / Naturalist Worldview

- How does the materialist determine what is truth and what is fact?
 - A common answer – science
 - Problem - science cannot speak
 - Science needs metaphysics in order to make sense out of what it examines or discovers
 - Science needs interpretation
 - Interpretation is based upon one’s worldview
 - Interpretation is never neutral
 - Interpretation is based upon the worldview the person has as they make sense of the world around them
 - Interpretation is based upon the individuals starting point / presupposition / ultimate authority
- What is the starting point / ultimate authority / presupposition?
 - Humanity – either the individual / group / consensus / the powerful elite
- How does the materialist account for their existence?
 - Evolution / randomness / impersonal / material / chance / matter in motion / cosmic accident / irrational
- Based upon their ultimate authority:
 - How does the materialist account for the existence of reason, experience, and logic?
- How does the atheist justify the correlation between these components – how they all work together?
 - Reason / experience / logic

- Reason is immaterial
- Experience is based upon the material
 - How do we justify the connection of immaterial reason with material experience?
- Based upon their ultimate authority:
 - How does the materialist know they can trust their reason, experience, and logic?
 - If all we are is random matter in motion:
 - If all we are is a cosmic accident
 - If our thoughts are nothing more than random chemicals moving around inside of our brain tissue
 - How can we ever trust our thoughts?
 - How can we ever trust our experience?
 - Where does the concept of right and wrong even come into play of all is random?
 - How does the idea of order and structure even enter into our minds if it all came about by random chance
 - Randomness can only produce more randomness
 - Our minds cannot make sense of anything if it came about by random chance
 - How does logic come into existence out of a random chaotic universe?
 - The laws of logic are immaterial – so how could they evolve out of material?
 - The laws of logic are abstract – they do not project themselves into space
 - The laws of logic are constant – they are always in affect
 - So how does matter in motion account for the laws of logic that govern every person’s thought process?
- Based upon their ultimate authority:
 - How can any conclusion they make be trustworthy?
 - If all we consist of is matter and chemicals in motion = we can’t
 - What authority do they rely upon to come to any conclusion at all about anything in life?
 - Themselves – without any external justification

How can human reason and experience be trusted when we all suffer from:

- Delusion / illusion / personal bias and opinion / fallibility / ignorance / misinterpretation / false assumptions / dishonesty / corruption / cheating / misinformation / limited information / limitations of cognitive ability / group think and peer pressure / political agendas / personal agendas / monetary gain / falsified information / incorrect presuppositions and starting points / limited life experience / desire for power / desire to control / purposely deceive others / possibility of being deceived

The Christian Theist / Biblical Worldview

- Christian Authority is God Himself
 - We start with Him because this is where He starts
 - God never defends His existence
 - God never attempts to convince anyone of His existence
 - He Himself is the starting point for all things
 - He cannot start anywhere else but Himself
 - **Hebrews 6:13** - *For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself*
 - Therefore – God is the ultimate authority in the Christian worldview
- How does the Christian determine what is truth and what is fact?
 - By thinking God's thoughts after Him
 - We don't *create* or *determine* truth
 - We *discover* it
 - A fact is a fact because God has determined it to be
 - It reflects His very character
- What is the starting point / ultimate authority / presupposition?
 - God Himself through His inspired Word
 - Jesus said God's Word is truth
 - **John 17:17** – *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*
 - When Scripture speaks, God speaks
 - **Matthew 22:31**- *Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read what was spoken to you by God*
 - The apostle Paul also verified this
 - **1 Thess. 2:13** - *This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the word of God, which also works effectively in you who believe*
 - Jesus Himself said Scripture cannot be broken
 - **John 10:35** – *and the Scripture cannot be broken*
 - Jesus refuted Satan when tempted in Matthew 4 by quoting Scripture
- How does the Christian account for their existence?
 - **Acts 17:24-26** - ²⁴*The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. ²⁵Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live.*
- Based upon a Christian's ultimate authority:
 - Question: How does the Christian account for the existence of reason, experience, and logic?

- Answer: Reason, experience, and logic exist because we are created in the image of an infinite being who is perfectly rational and logical
 - Reason and logic are a part of the very character and essence of God
 - We are created in His image and we reflect this in our personality
 - We have the ability to reason and think logically because God created us with these abilities
 - God is our infinite reference point for all things
- How does the Christian justify the correlation between these components – how they all work together?
 - Reason is immaterial
 - Experience is based upon the material
 - How do we justify the connection of immaterial reason with material experience?
 - God created both the body and the mind
 - In **Genesis 2:7** we read - *Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being*
 - Both the mind and our sensory experience function and work together because this is how God designed us to be
- Based upon the Christians ultimate authority:
 - How does the Christian know they can trust their reason, experience, and logic?
- Based upon their ultimate authority:
 - Question: How can any conclusion they make be trustworthy? What authority do they rely upon to come to any conclusion at all about anything in life?
 - Answer: Since the fall, humanity is no longer perfect in their use of reason, logic, and interpretation of sensory experience
 - Even in our state of perfection we were still completely dependent upon God
 - How much more do we need him now that we are fallen!
 - Every human being is born spiritually dead
 - Spiritual Deadness:
 - **Eph 2:1-2** - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*
 - We need to be redeemed
 - We need to be regenerated
 - **2 Cor 4:6** - *For God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ*

- As Van Til puts it: “Only the great Physician through His blood atonement on the Cross and by the gift of His Spirit can take those colored glasses off and make you see facts as they are, facts as evidence, as inherently compelling evidence, for the existence of God”
- Noetic effects of sin – the effect sin has on our mind, our ability to think, reason, and interpret the world around us correctly
 - It is like battery acid to the soul
 - It corrodes and decays us from within
 - We are flawed, imperfect, biased, and not a sufficient reference point on our own
- Facts are considered fact within the specific theory in which they operate
 - Biblical facts can only be understood within a biblical paradigm
 - Any paradigm outside of the biblical paradigm cannot justify a fact as being true
 - Because their ultimate authority is themselves / group consensus / the elite
 - It is based upon human reason, experience, and understanding which is flawed by spiritual deadness to God and by the noetic effects of sin upon the human soul
 - Worldviews will have different authorities behind them:
 - different foundations
 - different rules for evidence
 - different final appeals
 - different types of evidence
 - Therefore – in order for a person to be able to justify what they conclude as fact or true, they must be utilizing it within the correct worldview
 - They must be thinking God’s thoughts after Him
 - Their reason, sensory experience, and logic must all align up with how God has created and defined the world
 - This is what makes a fact true, and this is why absolute truth exists