

**CRITICAL**  
**— FAITH —**  
**THEORY**

Developing a Biblical Worldview



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# Contents

What Is Your Worldview? .....	7
Arcade Method.....	23
Cultural Integration .....	37
The Burning House.....	51
Inner City .....	67
Kingdom Wall Street .....	87
Protect Your Seed .....	101
Restoration and Redemption .....	115
True Worship .....	131
Outro .....	139
Acknowledgments .....	145



# What Is Your Worldview?

“N-word, don’t forget where you came from!”

He laughed the kind of scornful chuckle that is supposed to make you feel like the insult was in good fun while letting you know the sting was intended.

I didn’t laugh. I wasn’t angry, and my feelings weren’t hurt. I was confused. I’d heard this statement so much growing up—in person, in movies, and on TV. But familiar phrase or not, no one had ever said it to me.

Forgetting where you came from meant you were a sellout. You had forgotten what it meant to be from your neighborhood, from your culture. You had abandoned your people. You were an Uncle Tom (a misused phrase if you read the book, but more on that later). You had abandoned your “blackness.”

I had to say something, but wasn't sure what. We were sitting in my mom's kitchen, and I did not want things to get any more awkward. He had asked for a ride to his house, which was almost an hour and two counties away. It was after midnight, and I was tired. Furthermore, traveling at 1 a.m. would make me a prime target to be stopped by the police. While they might just be doing their job, my record could turn a fifteen-minute stop into a ninety-minute "have a seat here on the curb while my partner runs his dog around your car" experience.

"C'mon man, it ain't that far," his words were slurred. What the marijuana had started, the fifth of liquor had finished. He certainly wasn't driving anywhere.

"I tried to get a ride with my boy, but he left a while ago."

My mind was contemplating the words, "Don't forget where you came from." On the one hand, I think he meant we should never forget our struggles when we see someone else going through what God has delivered us from. On the other hand, forgetting our messed-up past could make us prideful and hardhearted toward others. We need to feel compassion because if not for the grace and mercy of God, we could still be there.

I would have wholeheartedly agreed with him if that was what he meant, but it wasn't. I could see it when I looked into his glassy, bloodshot eyes. There was a spark of resentment.

"What's wrong with that?" I asked.

“What’s wrong with what?”

He leaned in, a little unstable; the smell of the alcohol on his breath was stronger now. I didn’t want to argue, especially not with this long-time family friend, and even more with him being too drunk to have a real conversation. We had sat, talked, and laughed for an hour before he asked me for a ride, but tempers can quickly rise when alcohol is involved. Nevertheless, he had made the statement, and this was my mama’s house. I was going to tell him what I thought.

“What’s wrong with me forgetting where I came from?”

Sensing my anger, he started to say something, but I didn’t give him a chance to get a word in.

“Let’s look at where I came from: broken homes, drugs, gangs, poverty, watching my friends die, prison, and not to mention the struggle of trying to live life after prison. Why wouldn’t I want to forget this? Why shouldn’t I run as far from those memories as possible? Instead of acting like everybody who gets out, why shouldn’t I do everything I can to change this reality for as many people as possible?”

He would have loved to jump in, but I was on a roll.

“Why should we accept this idea that the only authentic reality for people who look like me is one defined by all this brokenness? Who made us? God! So, are we free to be who He called us to be, or am I supposed to be in bondage to my culture?”

“Nobody is saying you got to be in bondage,” he managed to say before I went on.

“Really? If we marry who the culture doesn’t accept, we’re canceled. If we vote for who the culture disapproves, we’re canceled. Serve at a church the culture doesn’t agree with? Canceled. It seems like we fought for our freedom just to be in bondage to the chains of our culture.”

At this point, I didn’t know if I was getting through to him, but I was going to give it my best. I was sitting in front of someone who did not realize how bound he was. I wanted him to see there was something more he could believe in—something bigger than the broken culture he was defending.

“What if God’s Kingdom is my culture?” I was ready to preach to him now. “What if my plan is God’s plan? What if my worldview is shaped by something bigger than my ethnicity? You might say that I am abandoning my people. But I say I am taking the Abraham approach and following God no matter where that leads and no matter who sees me as some kind of traitor. Can’t I love the people who I grew up around while still having a mindset of living for God’s glory?”

Our conversation tapered off, and we went our separate ways to sleep for the night. He was probably proud of himself for calling me out. I was disappointed that I had not gotten through to him, and maybe a little aggravated that he had suggested I had somehow betrayed my people.

Sleep did not come easy that night. I lay staring at the ceiling. I wished I could somehow communicate to him what I was trying to say, but it seemed like nothing I said made a difference. Then, it hit me. Our problem was not a communication problem; it was much deeper. We were divided by our worldviews.

We hear about worldview from pastors, politicians, and pundits, but what does it mean? Our worldview is the totality of all the factors that inform how we interact with the world around us. Those factors include our upbringing, values, personal journey, ethics, education, religious experiences, etc. Every life experience has contributed to our worldview. It has been shaped and reshaped repeatedly, with or without us noticing it, since the first moment we thought about how we should interact with the world around us.

I cannot overstate the importance of worldview. It is critical in each decision we make. It informs who we choose as a spouse, how we educate our children, the community we live in, the church we serve, who we vote for, how we interact with our neighbors, and so much more. That is why we must be careful about what shapes our worldview and defend our minds by guarding what we allow to influence us.

As Christians, society should not mold our worldview. We are people of God, and His Word must be the foundation of our thoughts. We must have a Biblical worldview that influences our entire life and not be limited to a few hours each Sunday. It should

guide us through every life decision, no matter how big or small.

Thankfully, the Bible is sufficient for every season and is full of wisdom for every situation. Even so, living with a Biblical worldview can be easier said than done. Our worldview and faith are under attack, and our human nature interferes with doing what we know is right. Nonetheless, we must do our best to see life through a Biblical lens and then take action that matches that view.

*Jesus taught us to pray, “Your Kingdom come.  
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*  
—Matthew 6:10

The correct desire of Christians is found in this prayer. We are supposed to want God’s will. As the body of Christ, we should see everything, even earthly matters, through the lens of Scripture, but that doesn’t always happen.

A shift has occurred in the Kingdom of God. The citizens of His Kingdom are living with divided worldviews. While we rejoice in knowing the Kingdom of God cannot be defeated and celebrate that Jesus is still King of kings, something is lacking. We find ourselves living defeated lives and disagreeing with one another, all while Satan is gaining ground.

This defeat, and the division that feeds it, results from our divided worldviews. Believers must have a single vision—like looking through a telescope—to have a clear view of all the territory we must navigate. Unfortunately, instead of a focused telescope, many of us are looking into a kaleidoscope—seeing



an image mixed up with people's opinions, our flesh, and the world's ideologies. We may throw in some Scripture, but that is just a small part of how we form our opinions. This should not be, for we are in perilous times. Without having a clear worldview, consequences will be devastating.

Developing my worldview has been quite a journey. If you have not already figured it out, I am an African American. Sorry for the spoiler. I am the happy husband of an amazing Caucasian woman I've been with for 18 years at the writing of this book. I am the father of four kids—three girls and one boy. I am a follower of Christ and a pastor. All of these things impact my worldview, but it is primarily shaped by my faith.

I know some who are reading this will now write me off for writing about race. Some will say I am following the religion of a white Jesus. Others will dismiss the type of church where I serve. A surprisingly large number of people will say my marriage disqualifies me from speaking about certain issues because “you can't sleep white and talk black.” I cannot help but wonder how they think Frederick Douglass (c. 1817-1895) managed to “talk black” regarding current affairs while going home to his Caucasian wife.

It may shock you that some members of my community feel if my position does not align with the “black” view on a given issue, my wife's influence must have corrupted me. My wife has been accused of the same regarding me. We have been told this concerning issues that break our hearts and the heart

of God. Somehow, depending on the side they are on, people think marrying someone of another race would somehow desensitize us regarding the issues of the day. If I take a stance that is seen as “white,” or if my wife seems to side with a “black” cause, we are written off as having been manipulated by our spouse and even labeled “traitors” to our people. (Regarding marrying someone from a different ethnicity: We are called to be equally yoked, not homogenously wed. That means our spirits need to match, not our melanin counts.)

So, let me set the record straight in the first chapter. If you believe my views are somehow twisted by being the husband of a white woman, the father of my beautiful biracial (which is not possible, for we are all one race) children, or a pastor who serves people of many ethnicities and cultures, you are sadly mistaken. You are just as mistaken if you think my views come solely from having been incarcerated, having run-ins with law enforcement, growing up around dysfunction, or having an absentee father who committed crimes. While they have helped shape my perspective, none of these things are the foundation of my worldview.

The positions presented in this book are not cultural or political in origin. They are not the views of an identity group. I do not speak for the husbands of Caucasians any more than I speak on behalf of all people of color. My positions come from prayerfully considering the Scriptures, studying culture

and history, and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in my life.

*“Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.’*  
—Genesis 12:1

Abraham got out; he didn’t sell out. From a cultural perspective, some would say Abraham was a sellout who forgot where he came from. He left his family, homeland, and identity to follow God. I wonder if Abraham had some conversations with friends and family like I did in that kitchen. Maybe they thought he was a traitor too. Maybe he even thought they were right about him.

I admit I spent too many of my early years as a Christian focused on the wrong thing. I tried to figure out how to be a “black Christian” instead of just being a Christian. I was more concerned being a sellout than selling out to Christ. Unfortunately, countless other people have also wasted time, talent, and energy trying to figure out how to be their “type” of Christian instead of just following God. Why? Because we have spent countless years making church about how it relates to culture instead of how it relates to Christ.

Initially, I was hesitant about the Christian faith. To be a Christian meant you had to abandon being a critical thinker. It meant you fell for the “white man’s religion.” It was weak. Take Martin Luther King Jr., for example. He had a stance of nonviolence—weak. Give me Malcolm X. Fighting back was the way of life in my neighborhood. I was focused on being

respected, protecting what was mine, and building my community. If I was going to be a Christian, I was going to be a Malcolm X Christian.

So, I spent most of my early years as a Christian trying harder not to lose my black identity than to gain a Christian identity. I didn't have a Biblical worldview. I had an "African American who happened to be a Christian" worldview. I wanted Jesus but was unwilling to do anything that looked like giving up my culture for Him; so, I didn't. I idolized my culture, costing me years of growing in Him.

You may be able to relate to my struggle, even if not for the same reason. You love Jesus but are not ready to give up your political party for Him. You want to be a Christian and speak from that worldview, but you don't want to take any course of action that will cost you your seat at the country club or your friendships with people who blatantly disagree with what the Bible says about the issues of the day. Unfortunately, that struggle with truth leads many of us to false ideologies, especially those centered on identity groups.

### **Black Hebrew Israelites**

I have encountered many people who have been deceived into identity-based worldviews. One ideology that has been around for some time is the Black Hebrew Israelite (BHI) view. While there are variations between groups, BHI teaches that African Americans are the real Israelites. White people cannot be real Jews, for are they descendants of Edom