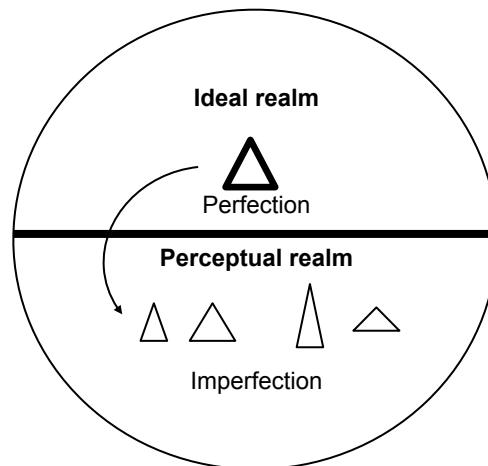


## I. GREEK WORLDVIEW: STRUCTURE OF REALITY

- A. In the Platonic worldview, reality is dichotomized or divided between two distinct realms: the ideal/intelligible/ realm of “forms.” This “realm” is conceived of and defined as immaterial, unchangeable, and timeless. “Forms” have a broad range of application, from the size and shape of material objects, to concepts like “Justice,” “Beauty.” This realm is very abstract, intangible, and ethereal. It is this realm of “ideals.”
- B. The “ideal realm” is understood over against the “perceptible” or “material realm,” which is thought to be the home of corrupt and imperfect “copies” of the ideal forms located in the metaphysical realm. For example, corrupt apples versus the ideal Apple in the ideal realm. Or corrupt triangles versus the ideal Triangle in the ideal realm.
- C. The fancy name for this two-fold splitting of reality is “metaphysical dualism,” or “Platonic dualism.”

Diagram 1: Metaphysical Dualism



- D. The “ideal realm,” according to this worldview, is by definition characterized by *perfection*; therefore, that which is desirable is located in this abstract/immaterial ideal realm. The intelligible realm is “good.” The perceptible/material realm, in contrast, is defined by imperfection, and is therefore undesirable and inferior. The material realm is cumbersome according to this worldview.
- E. Positive emotions are thus associated with the “ideal realm,” and negative emotions are associated with the perceptible realm (materiality is “yucky”).
- F. The problem with the world in this framework is *materiality itself*, and the solution (“salvation”), therefore, means *to escape materiality*.
- G. Christo-Platonism identifies “heaven” with the ideal realm, and “earth” with the material realm. Many Christians don’t realize that when they use terms like “supernatural” and “in the natural,” a Platonically-influenced worldview is often being assumed.

**II. BIBLICAL/HEBRAIC WORLDVIEW: STRUCTURE OF REALITY**

A. In contrast to the Greek worldview, reality in the Bible is structured as a multi-leveled yet single household/tent/tabernacle made up of the heavens and the earth, in which God in His humility has chosen to dwell. There is dynamic interaction between these different levels. The heavens and the earth constitute the domain over which God sits enthroned as King from the height of the heavens.

***In the beginning God created the heavens (Heb. shamayiim) and the earth. (NIV Gen. 1:1).***

***He builds the upper rooms of his palace (NIV – “lofty palace;” ESV/NASB/NRSV/YLT – “upper chambers”) in heaven (Heb. shamayiim “the heavens”) and sets its foundation supports on the earth. (NET Am. 9:6)***

***It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in. (ESV Is. 40:22)***

***This is what the Lord says: “The heavens are my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where then is the house you will build for me? (NET Is. 66:1)***

B. Diagram 2: The Household of Creation

***6 And God said, “Let there be an expanse (Heb. raqiyya) in the midst of the waters (Hebrew “mayim”), and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse Heaven (Hebrew “shamayim” –heavens). And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. (ESV Gen. 1:6-8)***

***...long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. (NIV 2 Pet. 3:5)***

**DAY 2**



***22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in (ESV Is. 40:22)***

C. The Bible teaches that creation is very good and originally existed in a state of perfection. In the Biblical worldview, diversity of life and variation in creation, materiality, and perfection are not mutually exclusive concepts. God is an artist!

***<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... God saw (assessment of reality) all that he had made, and it was very good (evaluation of reality)... <sup>31</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. (NIV Gn. 1:1, 31)***

- D. God felt great enjoyment, pleasure, and happiness when He created the world ! (e.g. Prov. 8:30-31, Job 38:6-7). God was thrilled as He did His handiwork!

***<sup>27</sup> I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep...<sup>30</sup> Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, <sup>31</sup> rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. (NIV Prov. 8:27, 30-31)***

- E. Human beings were commissioned to faithful, loving stewardship, enjoyment of the creation in partnership with God

***Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (NIV Gen. 1:26)***

***Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (NIV Gen. 2:19)***

***Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. (NIV 1 Tim. 6:17)***

- F. Implications for the Gospel

1. *Greek Worldview*: The “material realm” is inherently imperfect, yucky, contemptible. The cause of our problems is rooted in materiality and physicality.
2. *Christo-Platonism*: Salvation=escape from the material realm at death, and destruction of the creation at the Second Coming or at the end of the Millennium. The earth is not worth keeping, so God trashes it in the end.
3. *Biblical/Hebraic Worldview*: God is faithful to the creation despite its brokenness and fallenness. In His mercy He rescues it from sin and death and restores the creation through the worth of the Messiah. At the root of Christo-Platonism, therefore, is a *denial of the faithfulness of God*.

***<sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (NIV Ac. 3:19-21)***

***<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be***

***no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*** (NIV Rev. 21:3-5)

***<sup>6</sup> On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. <sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. (NIV Is. 25:6-8)***

***<sup>18</sup> I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. (in the resurrection at the Second Coming). <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated (creation is not longing for its annihilation!) from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (NIV Rom. 8:18-25)***

***<sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. <sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup> In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. (NIV Is. 11:6-11)***