*This is a small list of worldviews that are gaining presence and prominence not only among the secular, but in evangelical and religious groups that claim to be Christian.*

**Pantheism**

Pantheism is the view that God is everything and everyone and that everyone and everything is God. Pantheism is similar to polytheism (the belief in many gods), but goes beyond polytheism to teach that everything *is* God. A tree is God, a rock is God, an animal is God, the sky is God, the sun is God, you are God, etc. Pantheism is the supposition behind many cults and false religions (e.g., Hinduism and Buddhism to an extent, the various unity and unification cults, and “mother nature” worshipers).

Does the Bible teach pantheism? No, it does not. What many people confuse as pantheism is the doctrine of God’s omnipresence. [Psalm 139:7-8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.7-8) declares, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.” God’s omnipresence means He is present everywhere. There is no place in the universe where God is not present. This is not the same thing as pantheism. God is everywhere, but He is not everything. Pantheism is not at all a biblical belief.

The clearest biblical arguments against pantheism are the countless commands against idolatry. The Bible forbids the worship of idols, angels, celestial objects, items in nature, etc. If pantheism were true, it would not be wrong to worship such an object, because that object would, in fact, be God. If pantheism were true, worshiping a rock or an animal would have just as much validity as worshiping God as an invisible and spiritual being. The Bible’s clear and consistent denunciation of idolatry is a conclusive argument against pantheism.

**Christian Pantheism**

Christian pantheism is an attempt to connect the Bible with the false idea that everything that exists is, itself, actually God. This is the central idea of [pantheism](https://www.gotquestions.org/pantheism.html): that “God is everything, and everything is God.” However, the Bible clearly speaks of God as something separate from His creation. References to “Christian pantheism” are as self-contradictory as speaking of “square circles.” The two ideas are inherently incompatible. As a result, most attempts at interpreting Scripture to support pantheism involve dismissing that very Scripture in some way. This either happens through questioning the accuracy of the Bible or taking verses completely out of context.

Pantheism declares that only God exists; everything is God. This blatantly contradicts many core concepts presented in the Bible. God explicitly says He is not the same thing as man ([Numbers 23:19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num%2023.19)), the universe is a created thing ([Genesis 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%201.1)), man is made in His image ([Genesis 1:27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%201.27)), and so forth. Scripture describes man and God speaking to each other ([Genesis 3:9–10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%203.9%E2%80%9310); [Exodus 3:4–5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%203.4%E2%80%935)), God judging man ([Isaiah 2:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%202.4); [33:22](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isaiah%2033.22)), and God separating Himself from certain beings ([Revelation 20:12–15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2020.12%E2%80%9315)). The entire concept of prayer implies there is an “other” to hear the prayer ([Matthew 6:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.9)). This is why true pantheists do not *pray*; they *meditate*, since pantheism denies there is an “other” with whom to communicate.

Those attempting to defend Christian pantheism take certain Bible verses badly out of context. Almost all such errors focus on the idea of God’s Spirit indwelling man. For example, [Galatians 2:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%202.20) speaks of Christ living “in” us. [First Corinthians 3:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%203.16%E2%80%9317) refers to man’s body as the “temple of God.” [First John 3:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.24) mentions the Spirit “abiding” in believers. These verses, according to the pantheist, show that God and man are one and the same.

However, both the specific contexts of these verses and the overall context of the Bible show this view to be false. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not an obscure, poetic metaphor for pantheism. If Scripture intended to teach that “all is God, and God is all,” it would not reference concepts such as salvation, sin, prayer, or judgment, all of which imply an absolute, objective difference between two non-identical things.

Scripture is clear: Christian pantheism is another example of poor Bible interpretation and even worse logic.

**Process Theology**

Process theology is based on the philosophy that the only absolute which exists in the world is change. Therefore, God, too, is constantly changing. The Bible clearly states that process theology is false. [Isaiah 46:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2046.10) is unequivocal regarding God’s sovereignty and unchanging nature: “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.’” Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, is equally unchanging: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” ([Hebrews 13:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2013.8)). The Bible is clear that His plans do not change according to the whims of mere men ([Psalm 33:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2033.11)). He “does not change like shifting shadows” ([James 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.17)). But process theology does not consider the Bible to be inspired or to be our final authority.

The Bible expresses many attributes, qualities, and characteristics of God. These include His holiness ([Isaiah 6:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%206.3); [Revelation 4:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%204.8)); sovereignty ([1 Chronicles 29:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Chron%2029.11); [Nehemiah 9:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Neh%209.6); [Psalm 83:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2083.18); [Isaiah 37:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2037.20)); unity ([Deuteronomy 6:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%206.4)); omnipresence ([Psalm 139:7-10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.7-10)); omniscience ([Job 28:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2028.24); [Psalm 147:4-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20147.4-5)); omnipotence ([Job 42:1-2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2042.1-2)); self-existence ([Exodus 3:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%203.14); [Psalm 36:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2036.9)); eternality ([Psalm 90:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2090.2); [Habakkuk 1:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hab%201.12)); immutability ([Psalm 33:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2033.11); [James 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.17)); perfection ([Deuteronomy 32:3-4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%2032.3-4)); infiniteness ([Job 5:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%205.9); [9:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%209.10)); truth ([Deuteronomy 32:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%2032.4); [Psalm 86:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2086.15)); love ([1 John 4:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.8), [16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.16)); righteousness ([Psalm 11:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2011.7); [119:137](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%20119.137)); faithfulness ([Deuteronomy 7:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%207.9); [Ps. 89:33](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.%2089.33)); mercy ([Psalm 102:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20102.17)); graciousness ([Exodus 22:27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%2022.27); [Nehemiah 9:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Neh%209.17), [31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Nehemiah%209.31); [Psalm 86:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2086.15); [145:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%20145.17)); justice ([Psalm 111:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20111.7); [Isaiah 45:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2045.21)); and freedom ([Job 23:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2023.13); [Proverbs 21:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2021.1)). God uses these in the world and actively exercises all of these today. God transcends all of His creation, yet He is personal and knowable.

Process theology denies the deity of Jesus Christ, saying that Jesus has no intrinsic difference from any other man. Additionally, the humanistic philosophy of process theology teaches that mankind does not require salvation, while the Bible is clear that without Christ, man is hopelessly lost and doomed to hell for eternity. Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is God ([Isaiah 9:6-7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%209.6-7); [Matthew 1:22-23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%201.22-23); [John 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1), [2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.2), [14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.14); [20:28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2020.28); [Acts 16:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.31), [34](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.34); [Philippians 2:5-6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%202.5-6); [Colossians 2:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%202.9); [Titus 2:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%202.13); [Hebrews 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%201.8); [2 Peter 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet%201.1)) and that without His death on the behalf of sinners ([Romans 3:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.23); [6:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%206.23); [2 Corinthians 5:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%205.21)) no one could ever be saved ([John 1:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.12); [3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.18); [3:36](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.36); [14:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.6); [Acts 4:10-12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%204.10-12); [16:30-31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.30-31)).

**Panentheism**

Related to [Process Theology](https://www.gotquestions.org/process-theology.html), panentheism is essentially a combination of theism (God is the supreme being) and pantheism (God is everything). While pantheism says that God and the universe are coextensive, panentheism claims that God is greater than the universe and that the universe is contained within God. Panentheism holds that God is the “supreme effect” of the universe. God is everything in the universe, but God also is greater than the universe. Events and changes in the universe affect and change God. As the universe grows and learns, God also increases in knowledge and being.

Panentheism is most definitely not biblical. In fact, it is extreme heresy that impugns the character of God and makes Him more like a man. God is present everywhere ([Psalm 139:7-8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.7-8)), but God is not everything. God knows everything, whether actual or possible ([Psalm 139:1-6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.1-6); [Romans 11:33-35](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.33-35)). God does not learn because He already has all knowledge. God is “affected” by things that occur in the universe, but only in that sin angers Him and holiness pleases Him. Our actions do not change God or impact His essential being.

The Bible presents God as holy ([Isaiah 6:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%206.3); [Revelation 4:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%204.8)), sovereign ([1 Chronicles 29:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Chron%2029.11); [Nehemiah 9:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Neh%209.6); [Psalm 83:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2083.18); [Isaiah 37:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2037.20)), omnipresent ([Psalm 139:7-10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.7-10)), omniscient ([Job 28:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2028.24); [Psalm 147:4-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20147.4-5)), omnipotent ([Job 42:1-2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2042.1-2)), self-existent ([Exodus 3:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%203.14); [Psalm 36:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2036.9)), eternal ([Psalm 90:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2090.2); [Habakkuk 1:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hab%201.12)), immutable ([Psalm 33:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2033.11); [James 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.17)), perfect ([Deuteronomy 32:3-4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%2032.3-4)), and infinite ([Job 5:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%205.9); [9:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%209.10)). None of these attributes are compatible with panentheism. God transcends all of His creation, and is in no sense limited or changed by events in His creation.

In brief, panendeism is a combination of [pantheism](https://www.gotquestions.org/pantheism.html) and [deism](https://www.gotquestions.org/deism.html). Similar to pantheism, panendeism teaches that all of the natural universe is God. Similar to deism, panendeism teaches that God transcends the universe and is not involved in the running of the universe. So, panendeism is the belief in a god who contains the whole universe but who is also bigger than the universe and takes a “hands-off” approach to the maintenance of creation. The word *panendeism* literally means “all in god.”

Panendeism is also similar to [panentheism](https://www.gotquestions.org/panentheism.html), which is essentially a combination of [theism](https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-a-theist.html) (God is the supreme being) and pantheism (God is everything). Panentheism claims that God is greater than the universe and that the universe is contained within God—in that belief, it agrees with panendeism. But panentheism also holds that God exerts a controlling effect on the universe; this opposes panendeism, which denies that God is involved.

Basically, any deist who believes that the universe is a part (but not the whole) of god can be considered a panendeist. In panendeism the supreme being is seen as an all-pervasive intellect, identified as the universe but also existing beyond the universe. Panendeism claims to base its teachings about God on the evidence of reason and science. Some panendeists have added numerous additional beliefs to their basic theology.

The book *The Supra-Intelligent Design* by the Society for the Alignment of Religion has this to say in its entry on panendeism: “Panendeism divests itself from the idea of an explicitly thinking God. Panendeism holds that there is an aspect of reality that is different from physical reality, extending into a non-thinking (i.e., formless and changeless, implicit to reality) awareness realm—aware as a result of physical-reality dependent self-connecting self-apprehension, which defines reflexive self-awareness. Panendeism may be understood as panen-pantheism, which adds a trans-physical non-thought-hosting mathematical-fabric-sourcing awareness-realm component to a pantheistic reality.”

Of course, panendeism is unbiblical, just as pantheism and deism are. The Creator God has revealed Himself to mankind in the Bible, and here is some of what we know about Him in that revelation:

1. God reveals Himself in nature ([Psalm 19:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2019.1)) but is separate from nature.

2. God is a personal being ([Isaiah 46:9–10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2046.9%E2%80%9310)).

3. God is triune ([Matthew 28:19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2028.19)).

4. God loving ([1 John 4:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.9)) and is personally involved in His creation ([Psalm 37:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2037.23); [Proverbs 16:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2016.9)).

Panendeism wrongly asserts that God is to be equated with His creation. The Bible says that God created that oak tree in your backyard but that the tree is *not* a part of God. God is present everywhere ([Psalm 139:7–8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.7%E2%80%938)), but God is not everything. Panendeism assigns God as being impersonal and uninvolved. The Bible says that God is a personal being with a mind ([Psalm 139:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20139.17)), emotions ([Psalm 78:41](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2078.41)), and a will ([1 Corinthians 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%201.1)); and that He is intimately involved in His creation, as shown in the [incarnation of Christ](https://www.gotquestions.org/incarnation-of-Christ.html).

**Monolatrism/Henotheism**

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, monolatry (also called monolatrism) is the worship of only one god without denying the existence of other gods. Henotheism is related in that it recognizes many gods yet chooses to focus exclusively on one—usually considered the god of one’s family or clan. A monolater or a henotheist is committed to one god, but he leaves room for other deities as well. Many cultures in ancient times believed in more than one god, but some of those cultures still paid homage to one god above the others.

[Hinduism](https://www.gotquestions.org/hinduism.html) is a classic example of monolatry or henotheism in practice. Hindus generally worship one god, yet they acknowledge that there are countless other gods that can be worshiped as well. The ancient Egyptians believed in many gods but at times (depending on who the Pharaoh was) one god was elevated above others. The religion of the ancient Greeks and their worship of the Olympians is another well-known example, with Zeus being the supreme ruler of eleven other gods. All twelve were worshiped, each individually by a different sect with its own temple, its own priests, and its own shrines (see [Acts 14:12–13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.12%E2%80%9313); [19:35](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.35)).

Some historians believe that the early Israelites were henotheists/monolaters. This would help explain the production of the golden calf in [Exodus 32:3–5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%2032.3%E2%80%935) and why one of the Ten Commandments says, “You shall have no other gods before me” ([Exodus 20:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%2020.3)). These passages hint that the ancient Israelites were not fully developed monotheists. Through Moses, God began to teach the Hebrews that the [God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob](https://www.gotquestions.org/God-of-Abraham-Isaac-Jacob.html) is the one true God over all. The prophet Isaiah, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, reminded Israel and all other nations of God’s true nature: “I am the Lord, and there is no other; / apart from me there is no God. . . . / I am the Lord, and there is no other” ([Isaiah 45:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2045.5%E2%80%936)).

Sometimes, the Israelites seemed to believe that other nations had their own gods, although Yahweh was still the supreme deity. However, if the Israelites tended toward henotheism or monolatry, they did so in spite of what God had revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. [Deuteronomy 6:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%206.4) takes away all doubt about there being multiple gods: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” Henotheism or monolatry is incompatible with biblical teaching.

The Bible is clear on the issue: there is only one God. Henotheism or monolatry is wrong in that it acknowledges the existence of other gods. The whole of the Bible hinges on the fact of one God, for, if other gods existed, then Jesus Christ would not have had to die—there would be many roads leading to heaven.

When Paul visited Athens, he saw statues of many Greek and Roman gods. The Athenians had shrines to them all over the city. One particular altar caught Paul’s attention. On it were inscribed the words “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” ([Acts 17:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.23)). In their ignorance, the Greeks had erected an altar to whatever god they might have inadvertently left out of their pantheon, and some of the henotheists or monolaters had undoubtedly chosen that [“unknown god”](https://www.gotquestions.org/unknown-god.html) as the deity to focus on. Since the Greeks obviously didn’t know who this god was, Paul explained that their “unknown god” was the God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth. The one true God does not dwell in temples made with hands. The Greeks were unable to find the one true God on their own, so the one true God came searching for them.

**Unitarian Universalism**

Unitarian Universalism is a fairly small, yet widely influential, religious group. Having some 300,000 registered members, mostly in the United States, they are becoming more and more popular. Relativism, tolerance, and alternative lifestyles are all buzz words used by Unitarian Universalism.

The Unitarian Universalist name comes from their denial of the doctrine of the Trinity and their belief that all human beings gain salvation. According to Universalists, the mere idea someone might go to hell is not compatible with the character of a loving God. Its roots go all the way back to the sixteenth century when [Unitarian](https://www.gotquestions.org/unitarianism.html) beliefs became popular during the Reformation. Unitarian thought and Universal thought were merged together during the late eighteenth-century in America during the Age of Reason. The intellectual elite of that time refused to believe in such biblical teachings as total depravity and eternal damnation, but rather embraced the idea of a loving God who would never cause someone to suffer.

Adherents of Unitarian Universalism base their beliefs primarily upon their own experiences and are not committed to any one religious system. They believe that individuals have the right to decide for themselves what to believe in and that others should not infringe upon this right. As a result, one such believer might lean toward liberal Christianity, while another might lean toward New Age spirituality. There is no real dogma beyond tolerance—for everything except biblical Christianity. Unitarian Universalists view the Bible as a book of poetry, myth, and moral teaching, a completely human book and not truly the Word of God. They reject the Bible’s portrayal of a Triune God, leaving the concept of God up to each individual’s imagination.

To the Unitarian Universalist, Jesus was a good moral teacher, but nothing more. He is not considered to be divine, and every miracle associated with Him is rejected as being outside of human reason. Most sayings of Jesus recorded in the Bible are regarded as embellishments on the part of the authors. Among the Universalist beliefs: Jesus did not die to save mankind from sin, as man is not a fallen sinner; emphasis is placed on humankind’s capacity for goodness; sin is completely relative, and the term itself is rarely used; man saves himself through personal improvement, salvation being a purely worldly experience, a "waking up" to the world around oneself. This is very important, for death is final. Most Unitarian Universalists deny the existence of an afterlife, so all we have on earth is all we’ll ever get.

The Bible, on the other hand, refutes these falsehoods. Jesus does save mankind, which was in a fallen state since the Garden of Eden and separated from God by sin ([John 10:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.15); [Romans 3:24-25](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.24-25); [5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%205.8); [1 Peter 2:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%202.24)). Man is not good, but sinful and hopelessly lost. It is only through the grace of God and faith in the shed blood of Christ on the cross that mankind can be reconciled to a holy, transcendent God ([Genesis 2:16-17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%202.16-17); [3:1-19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%203.1-19)); [John 3:36](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.36); [Romans 3:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.23); [1 Corinthians 2:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%202.14); [Ephesians 2:1-3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.1-3); [1 Timothy 2:13-14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%202.13-14); [1 John 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.8)).

Unitarian Universalism has nothing in common with biblical Christianity. It is a false gospel, its teachings are contrary to the Bible, and its members strongly oppose traditional, biblical Christian beliefs (while purporting to be free of discrimination or prejudice of any kind). The Bible clearly refutes Unitarian Universalism on all the major points of its teachings.

**Universalism**

[Universalism](https://www.gotquestions.org/universalism.html), the belief that everyone will eventually be saved, can be subdivided into various theological types. One of those types is ultra-universalism, which expands on the teaching of universal salvation.

In Christian theology, universalism is the idea that all humankind will eventually be saved through Christ—everyone makes his or her way to heaven because Jesus died for everyone, and His sacrifice covered the sins of the whole world. Then there is inter-religious universalism, which holds that everyone will be saved and go to some type of heaven, although not on the basis of the cross—salvation comes apart from any connection to Christ.

Within Christian universalism, there are further theological divisions—some based on various views of the atonement. Some universalists believe that all non-Christians will be automatically saved in Christ, whether they know Him or not (a type of inclusivism). Others believe that salvation for each person will occur only after he or she makes a profession of belief in the lordship of Jesus Christ (a type of exclusivism). One day, “at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” ([Philippians 2:10–11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%202.10%E2%80%9311)); when that happens, say universalists who hold to exclusivism, everyone will be saved.

Another major division within universalism is based on the idea of torment after death. The question is, before ultimate salvation, will the unsaved have to experience hell or some kind of torment? Some who believe in [ultimate reconciliation](https://www.gotquestions.org/ultimate-reconciliation.html) or ultimate restoration say that, yes, there will be a time of suffering after death for the unsaved, but everyone will eventually be released from hell and taken to heaven. In their view, hell is remedial, not punitive, and functions more as a purgatory. Ultra-universalists, on the other hand, believe there is no suffering at all after death. All people go straight to heaven when they die. Ultra-universalists (also called strong universalists) believe that all will be saved and that no one will experience punishment. In their view, no hell exists.

Universalism has never been an official doctrine of orthodox Christianity. According to Michael McClymond, author of *The Devil’s Redemption*, “Universalism seems . . . to be fundamentally out of sync with the New Testament narrative of God’s loving initiative in Christ provoking some to faith and others to offense and even hatred” (interview with Copan, P., “How Universalism, ‘the Opiate of the Theologians,’ Went Mainstream,” *Christianity Today*, 3/11/19). Ultra-universalism has even deeper problems, as it logically allows for [antinomianism](https://www.gotquestions.org/antinomianism.html) and severs all ethical connections between this world and the afterlife. If there are no consequences for wrongdoing, all present-day choices are drained of their moral impact.

Ultra-universalism is, of course, inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. Jesus indicated that some people will experience torment after death (see [Luke 16:22–24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2016.22%E2%80%9324)). And He clearly taught an end-times judgment: “The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” ([Matthew 13:41–42](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.41%E2%80%9342)). In that furnace-like place, Jesus says, people will discover that “the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched” ([Mark 9:48](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%209.48)).

**Antinomianism**

The word antinomianism comes from two Greek words, anti, meaning "against"; and nomos, meaning "law." Antinomianism means “against the law.” Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. The biblical teaching is that Christians are not required to observe the Old Testament Law as a means of salvation. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament Law ([Romans 10:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.4); [Galatians 3:23-25](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%203.23-25); [Ephesians 2:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.15)). The unbiblical conclusion is that there is no moral law God expects Christians to obey.

The apostle Paul dealt with the issue of antinomianism in [Romans 6:1-2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.1-2), “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” The most frequent attack on the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is that it encourages sin. People may wonder, “If I am saved by grace and all my sins are forgiven, why not sin all I want?” That thinking is not the result of true conversion because true conversion yields a greater desire to obey, not a lesser one. God’s desire—and our desire when we are regenerated by His Spirit—is that we strive not to sin. Out of gratitude for His grace and forgiveness, we want to please Him. God has given us His infinitely gracious gift in salvation through Jesus ([John 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.16); [Romans 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.8)). Our response is to consecrate our lives to Him out of love, worship, and gratitude for what He has done for us ([Romans 12:1-2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.1-2)). Antinomianism is unbiblical in that it misapplies the meaning of God’s gracious favor.

A second reason that antinomianism is unbiblical is that there is a moral law God expects us to obey. [First John 5:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.3) tells us, “This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.” What is this law God expects us to obey? It is the law of Christ – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” ([Matthew 22:37-40](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2022.37-40)). No, we are not under the Old Testament Law. Yes, we are under the law of Christ. The law of Christ is not an extensive list of legal codes. It is a law of love. If we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we will do nothing to displease Him. If we love our neighbors as ourselves, we will do nothing to harm them. Obeying the law of Christ is not a requirement to earn or maintain salvation. The law of Christ is what God expects of a Christian.

Antinomianism is contrary to everything the Bible teaches. God expects us to live a life of morality, integrity, and love. Jesus Christ freed us from the burdensome commands of the Old Testament Law, but that is not a license to sin. Rather, it is a covenant of grace. We are to strive to overcome sin and cultivate righteousness, depending on the Holy Spirit to help us. The fact that we are graciously freed from the demands of the Old Testament Law should result in our living our lives in obedience to the law of Christ. [First John 2:3-6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.3-6) declares, “We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. The man who says, ‘I know Him,’ but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys His word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.”hat is antoniasim?

**POSTMODERNISM**

Simply put, postmodernism is a philosophy that affirms no objective or absolute truth, especially in matters of religion and spirituality. When confronted with a truth claim regarding the reality of God and religious practice, postmodernism’s viewpoint is exemplified in the statement “that may be true for you, but not for me.” While such a response may be completely appropriate when discussing favorite foods or preferences toward art, such a mindset is dangerous when it is applied to reality because it confuses matters of opinion with matters of truth.

The term “postmodernism” literally means “after modernism” and is used to philosophically describe the current era which came after the age of [modernism](https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-modernism.html). Postmodernism is a reaction (or perhaps more appropriately, a disillusioned response) to modernism’s failed promise of using human reason alone to better mankind and make the world a better place. Because one of modernism’s beliefs was that absolutes did indeed exist, postmodernism seeks to “correct” things by first eliminating absolute truth and making everything (including the empirical sciences and religion) relative to an individual’s beliefs and desires.

The dangers of postmodernism can be viewed as a downward spiral that begins with the rejection of absolute truth, which then leads to a loss of distinctions in matters of religion and faith, and culminates in a philosophy of religious pluralism that says no faith or religion is objectively true and therefore no one can claim his or her religion is true and another is false.

**Dangers of Postmodernism - #1 – Relative Truth**

Postmodernism’s stance of relative truth is the outworking of many generations of philosophical thought. Beginning with the [Renaissance](https://www.gotquestions.org/Renaissance-Christianity.html) the 14th – 17th centuries, thinkers began to elevate humankind to the center of reality. God was not the center of truth any longer – man was.

The philosopher who contributed to the idea of relative truth was the Prussian [Immanuel Kant](https://www.gotquestions.org/Immanuel-Kant.html) and his work *The Critique of Pure Reason*, which appeared in 1781. Kant argued that true knowledge about God was impossible, so he created a divide of knowledge between “facts” and “faith.” According to Kant, “Facts have nothing to do with religion.” The result was that spiritual matters were assigned to the realm of opinion. While modernism believed in absolutes in science, God’s special revelation (the Bible) was evicted from the realm of truth and certainty.

From modernism came postmodernism and the ideas of Frederick Nietzsche. As the patron saint of postmodernist philosophy, Nietzsche held to “perspectivism,” which says that all knowledge (including science) is a matter of perspective and interpretation, and is a rejection of any hint of absolute truth. This philosophical war against objective truth has resulted in postmodernism being completely averse to any claim to absolutes. Such a mindset naturally rejects and opposes anything that declares to be inerrant truth, such as the Bible.

**Dangers of Postmodernism - #2 – Loss of Discernment**

The great theologian Thomas Aquinas said, “It is the task of the philosopher to make distinctions.” What Aquinas meant is that truth is dependent upon the ability to discern – the capability to distinguish “this” from “that” in the realm of knowledge. However, if objective and absolute truth does not exist, then everything becomes a matter of personal interpretation. To the postmodern thinker, the author of a book does not possess the correct interpretation of his work; it is the reader who actually determines what the book means – a process called deconstruction. And given that there are multiple readers (vs. one author), there are naturally multiple valid interpretations.

Such a chaotic situation makes it impossible to make meaningful or lasting distinctions between interpretations because there is no standard that can be used because truth is determined by personal interpretation.

**Dangers of Postmodernism - #3 – Pluralism**

If absolute truth does not exist, and if there is no way to make meaningful, right/wrong distinctions between different faiths and religions, then the natural conclusion is that all beliefs must be considered equally valid. The proper term for this in postmodernism is “philosophical pluralism.” With pluralism, no religion has the right to pronounce itself true and the other competing faiths false, or even inferior. There is no longer any heresy, except perhaps the view that there are heresies. D. A. Carson underscores conservative evangelicalism’s concerns about what it sees as the danger of pluralism: “In my most somber moods I sometimes wonder if the ugly face of what I refer to as philosophical pluralism is the most dangerous threat to the gospel since the rise of the Gnostic heresy in the second century.”

These progressive dangers of postmodernism – relative truth, a loss of discernment, and philosophical pluralism – represent imposing threats to Christianity because they collectively dismiss God’s Word as something that has no real authority over mankind and no ability to show itself as true in a world of competing religions. What is Christianity’s response to these challenges?

**Response to the Dangers of Postmodernism**

Christianity claims to be absolutely true, that meaningful distinctions in matters of right/wrong (as well as spiritual truth and falsehood) exist, and that to be correct in its claims about God any contrary claims from competing religions must be incorrect. Such a stance provokes cries of “arrogance” and “intolerance” from postmodernism. However, truth is not a matter of attitude or preference, and when closely examined, the foundations of postmodernism quickly crumble.

First, Christianity claims that absolute truth exists. In fact, Jesus specifically says that He was sent to do one thing: “To testify to the truth” ([John 18:37](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2018.37)). Postmodernism says that no truth should be affirmed, yet its position is self-defeating – it affirms at least one absolute truth: that no truth should be affirmed. This means that postmodernism does believe in absolute truth. Its philosophers write books stating things they expect their readers to embrace as truth. Putting it simply, one professor has said, “When someone says there is no such thing as truth, they are asking you not to believe them. So don’t.”

Second, Christianity claims that meaningful distinctions exist between the Christian faith and all other beliefs. It should be understood that those who claim meaningful distinctions do not exist are actually making a distinction. They are attempting to showcase a difference in what they believe to be true and the Christian’s truth claims. Postmodernist authors expect their readers to come to the right conclusions about what they have written and will correct those who interpret their work differently from what they have intended. Again, their position and philosophy proves itself to be self-defeating because they eagerly make distinctions between what they believe to be correct and what they see as being false.

Finally, Christianity claims to be universally true in what it says regarding man’s lost condition before God, the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of fallen mankind, and the separation between God and anyone who chooses not to accept what God says about sin and the need for repentance. Just as it is not arrogant for a math teacher to insist that 2+2=4 or for a locksmith to insist that only one key will fit a locked door, it is not arrogant for the Christian to stand against postmodernist thinking and insist that Christianity is true and anything opposed to it is false. Absolute truth does exist, and consequences do exist for being wrong. While pluralism may be desirable in matters of food preferences, it is not helpful in matters of truth. The Christian should present God’s truth in love and simply ask any postmodernist who is angered by the exclusive claims of Christianity, “So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?” ([Galatians 4:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%204.16)).

**Post-modern Christianity**

Post-modern Christianity is just as difficult to lock down in a concise definition as post-modernism itself. Think of anything considered post-modern, then stick Christianity into that context and you have a glimpse of what post-modern Christianity is.

Post-modern Christianity falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking. It is about experience over reason. This, of course, is up to each believer. However, when groups form under such thinking, theology and doctrine tend to lean more towards liberalism.

For example, because experience is valued more highly than reason, truth becomes relative. This opens all kinds of problems, as this lessens the standard that the Bible contains absolute truth, and even disqualifies biblical truth as being absolute in many cases. If the Bible is not our source for absolute truth, and personal experience is allowed to define and interpret what truth actually is, a saving faith in Jesus Christ is rendered meaningless.

There will always be "paradigm shifts" in thinking as long as mankind inhabits this present earth, because mankind constantly seeks to better itself in knowledge and stature. Challenges to our way of thinking are good, as they cause us to grow, to learn, and to understand. This is the principle of [Romans 12:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.2) at work, of our minds being transformed. Yet, we need to be ever mindful of [Acts 17:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.11) and be like the Bereans, weighing every new teaching, every new thought, against Scripture. We don’t let our experiences interpret Scripture for us, but as we change and conform ourselves to Christ, we interpret our experiences according to Scripture. Unfortunately, this is not what is happening in circles espousing post-modern Christianity.

**The Emerging Church**

The emerging, or emergent, church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge in response. In this case, it is a response by various church leaders to the current era of post-modernism. Although post-modernism began in the 1950s, the church didn’t really seek to conform to it until the 1990s. Post-modernism can be thought of as a dissolution of "cold, hard fact" in favor of "warm, fuzzy subjectivity." The emerging / emergent church movement can be thought of the same way.

The emerging / emergent church movement falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking—it is about experience over reason, feelings over truth. This movement is still fairly new, though, so there is not yet a standard method of "doing" church amongst the groups choosing to take a post-modern mindset. In fact, the emerging church rejects any standard methodology for doing anything. Therefore, there is a huge range of how far groups take a post-modernist approach to Christianity. Some groups go only a little way in order to impact their community for Christ and remain somewhat biblically sound. Most groups, however, embrace post-modernist thinking, which eventually leads to a very liberal, loose translation of the Bible. This, in turn, lends to liberal charismatic doctrine and theology.

For example, because experience is valued more highly than reason, truth becomes relative. Relativism opens up all kinds of problems, as it destroys the standard that the Bible contains absolute truth, negating the belief that biblical truth can be absolute. If the Bible is not our source for absolute truth, and personal experience is allowed to define and interpret what truth is, a saving faith in Jesus Christ is rendered meaningless.

Another area where the emerging / emergent church movement has become anti-biblical is its focus on ecumenism. Unity among people coming from different religious backgrounds and diversity in the expression of corporate worship are strong focuses of the emergent church movement. Being ecumenical means that compromise is taking place, and this results in a watering down of Scripture in favor of not offending an apostate. This is in direct opposition to passages such as [Revelation 2:14-17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%202.14-17), Jesus’ letter to the church of Pergamum, in which the Church is warned against tolerating those who teach false doctrine.

False doctrine seems to abound within the emerging / emergent church movement, though, as stated previously, not within every group espousing emerging / emergent church beliefs. Because of this, care must be taken when deciding whether or not to become involved with an emergent church group. We all need to take heed of [Matthew 7:15-20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.15-20), "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."

While seeking new ways to witness to a changing culture is admirable, utilizing ways which compromise the Truth of the Gospel in any way is nothing more than promoting false doctrine and leading others away from Christ instead of to Him.

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