

# How People Think (revised order!)

## **Week 1**

Why think?

Christian worldview

## **Week 2**

Secular materialism & intolerance

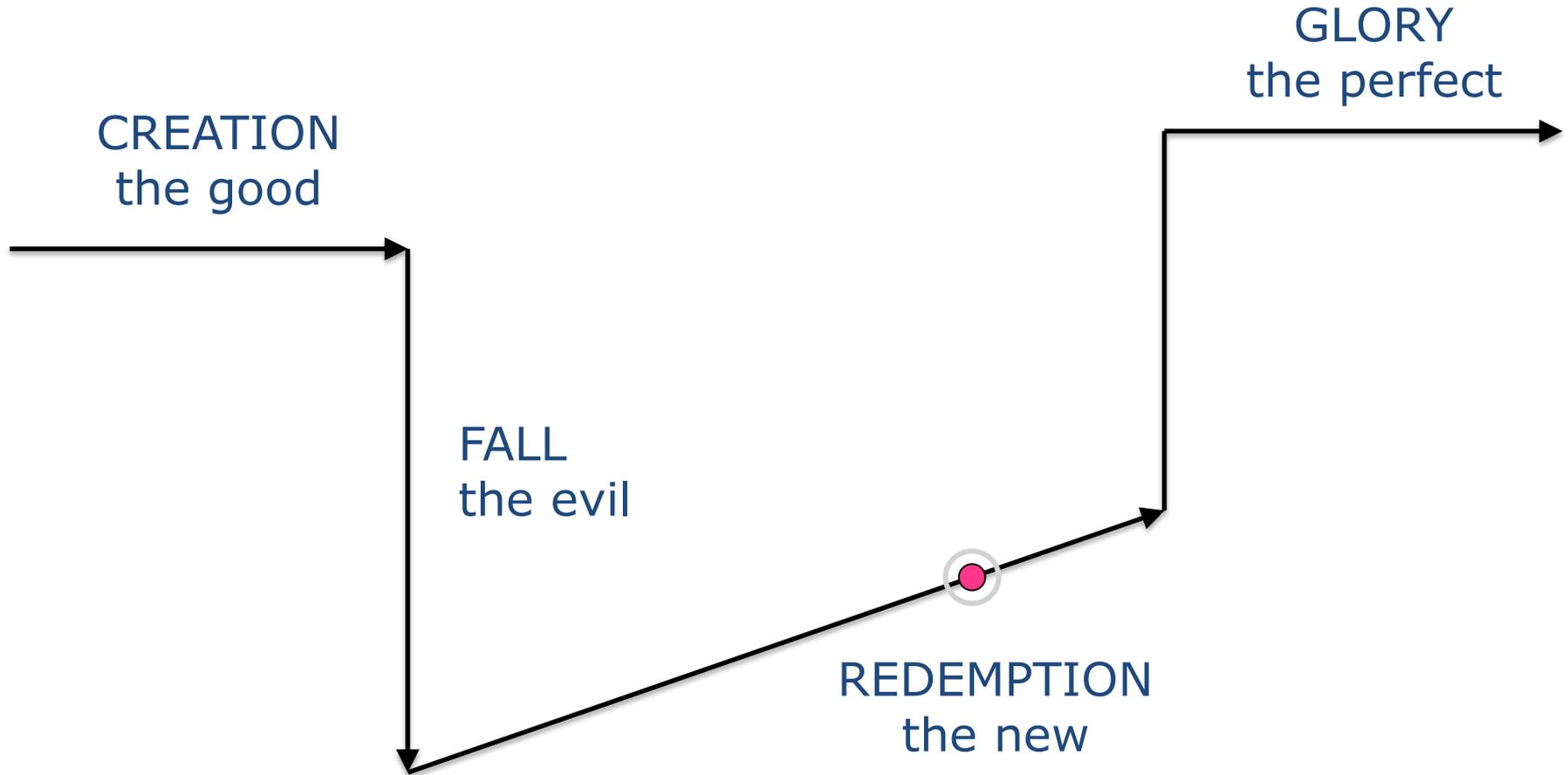
## **Week 3**

Existentialism and Post-modernism

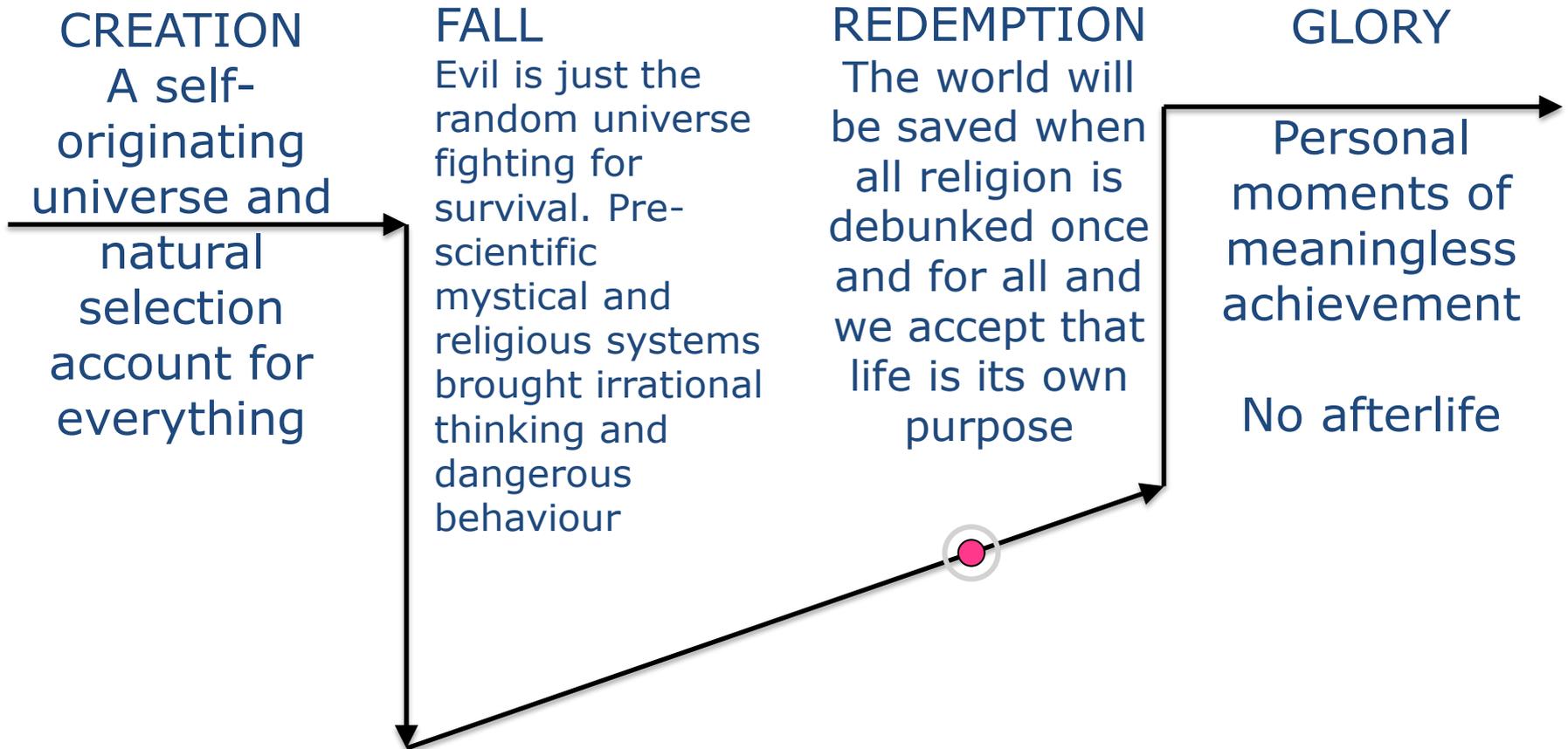
## **Week 4**

Other religions – Islam, new age

# Christian Worldview



# Secular Worldview



**PRIME REALITY: God is infinite and personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good.**

**For each person death is either the gateway to life with God and his people or the gateway to eternal punishment.**

**History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfilment of God's purposes for humanity.**

**Ethics is transcendent and based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).**

**God created the universe ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.**



**Human beings are created in the image of God and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness and creativity.**

**Human beings can know both the world around them and God himself because God has built into them the capacity to do so and because he takes an active role in communicating with them.**

# from theism to deism (~1700-1750)

God is silenced

God is reduced

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**Possibly an afterlife.**

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from deism to naturalism

God is further reduced

He loses his very existence

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# Critiquing Secular Materialism

- First cause “Out of nothing, nothing comes”
  - a changing universe must have a beginning “
  - a beginning requires a cause
- Evidence of design
  - Fine tuning of the universe
  - Irreducible complexity
- the universe is ordered
  - how can disorder produce order?
- replication requires information
  - which came first, the information or the storage mechanism?

# the problem of personhood

- someone cannot be made from something
- we are self-conscious and self-determining
  - we evaluate and make choices
  - we love and hate, experiencing joy and sorrow
  - we appreciate beauty and harmony
  - we value truth and justice
  - we communicate, create and imagine
  - we aspire to purpose and significance
- we sense that we are persons not machines
- Why is survival a purpose that evolution assumes?

# the problem of personhood

- theism
  - God is personal (trinity) → man is personal
  - the source is sufficient
- naturalism
  - the impersonal (plus time plus chance) → human personhood
  - the source is insufficient
  - personhood is no more than an illusion

# the problem of ethics

- The world provides no ought

“In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.”

– The Blind Watchmaker, Richard Dawkins

# the problem of ethics

- The world provides no ought
  - Ethics is about what ought to be whether it is or not
- Are moral values merely relative to one's culture?
  - another way of saying that is=ought but is every cultural value to be affirmed?
  - is preserving culture the ultimate value? then why?
  - is cultural progress to be preferred? then how do we judge what is progress? how do we argue against the eradication of the weak?

# the problem of knowledge

- if knowledge arises from the functioning of matter...
  - why is there any reason to believe that matter has any interest in leading a conscious being to a true perception?
  - why should whatever that matter is conscious of be related in any way to reality?
  - how can we believe in reason coming from non-reason?

# the problem of knowledge

“If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motion of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true... and hence I have no reason to suppose my brain to be composed of atoms.”

*Miracles, J.B.S. Haldane (London:  
Fontana, 1960, p.18)*

# the problem of knowledge

“The horrid doubt always arises whether the conviction’s of man’s mind, which has developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust the convictions of a monkey’s mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?”

Charles Darwin quoted in *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin and Selected Letters* (1892; reprint, New York: Dover 1958)

# the reality of knowledge

- there is too much evidence to deny that we have knowledge
- but the Naturalist has no way to explain why we have it

# the failure of naturalism

- to explain the existence of the universe
  - it merely asserts that it (and it alone) exists
- to explain the experience of being human
  - either, that which is impersonal and without values or rationality has by accident produced a personal human being with moral sense and knowledge (which is illogical and against all experience)
  - or, personhood, morality and knowledge are an illusion (which is logical but impossible to live by consistently)
- Fundamental hopelessness

# Five evidences for God

1. There had to be a beginning a first uncaused cause
2. Totally improbable fine tuning for existence
3. Existence of Information (e.g DNA) is contingent on an information giver
4. Objective morality in all of us
5. The resurrection is the only credible explanation for the church

# naturalism's denial of the truth

## Romans 1:18-20

<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

# the wonder of the psalmist

## Psalm 8:3-9

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

**You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour.**

You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

# The success of Christian worldview

- Creation itself points to uncaused, personal, moral, designer
- Revelation tells us who he is
- Revelation explains good and evil
- Revelation gives us hope