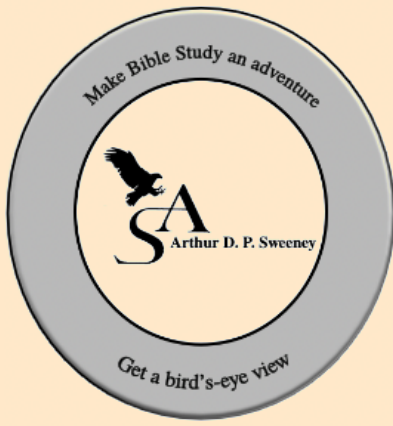




1



God's two-worlds view



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Structure and meaning](#)

[World views](#)

[Competing world views](#)

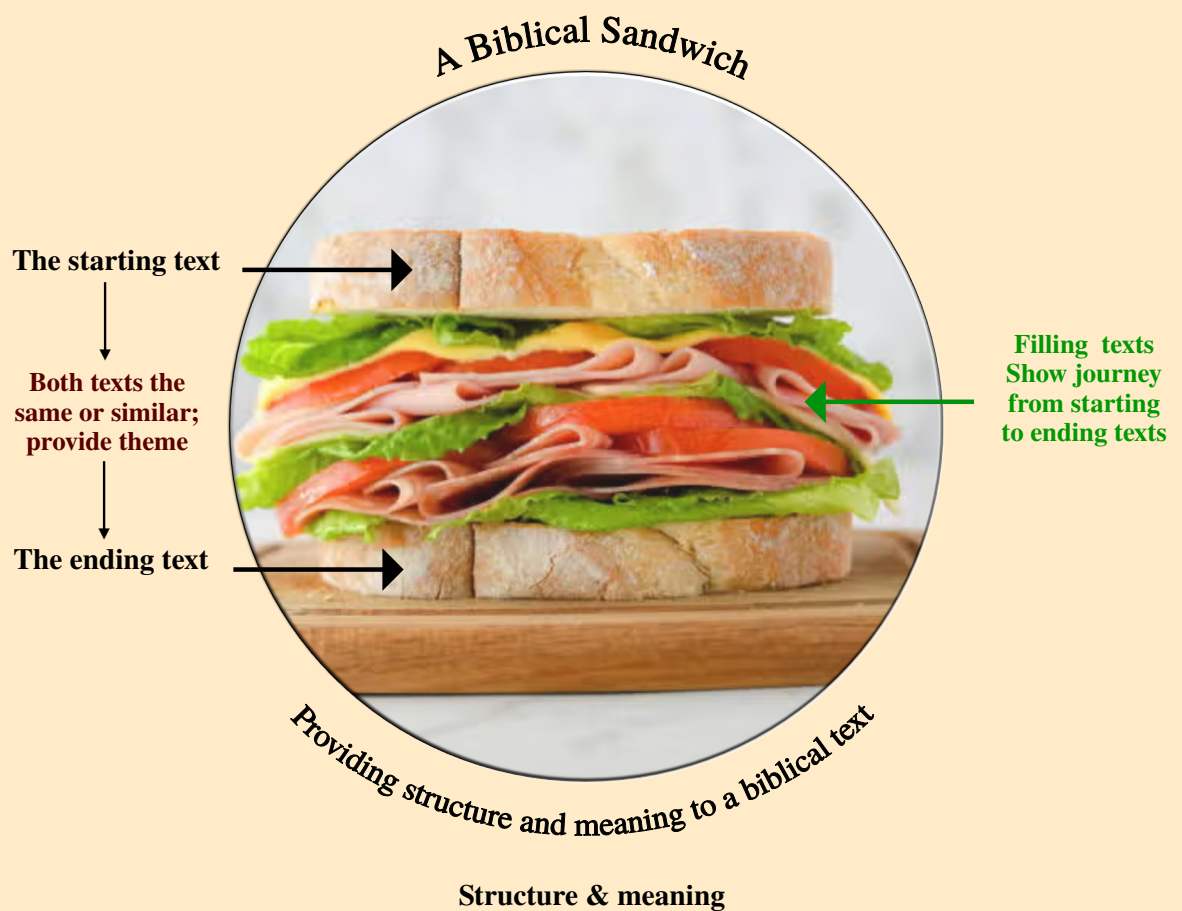
[Setting and meaning](#)

[Style and meaning](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

2/6



My interest in this introductory sandwich paper is in the structure of texts. *Structure*, or the organisation of ideas that an author brings to his work, is one of the features that is critical to interpretation. In biblical texts, one particular structural technique favoured by writers is the "inclusio", which is a literary device that frames a body of text with similar beginnings and endings. By using this device, the two outer parts highlight the central theme, informing and shaping the reader's understanding of the middle section. I prefer to call inclusios, colloquially, 'sandwiches', which have two outer layers and an filling as depicted in the graphic above. For believers who come to the Bible looking for spiritual food, 'sandwich' is a much more appetising label.

Everything has *structure*, whether it's the human body, a house, or music or literature. The human body without structure is just a heap of bones and tissues. A house without structure is just a pile of building materials on the ground. Also, music without structure is just a babble of sounds.

Finally, a piece of literature has structure for without it, there is no work of literature - just a jumble of words. At the micro level of a text, words have structure, words are structured into sentences, sentences are structured into paragraphs, and at the macro level, paragraphs are structured into parts of a whole. Structure is essential to interpretation and understanding. Interpretation is about a text's intended meaning; understanding a text is to know its meaning.

And that brings me to the greatest, and most popular piece of literature of all time. The Bible. Just as secular writers *structure*, or organise their text to fit their purpose, so too the biblical writers inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Bible's overall structure provides us with a biblical world view, which I address next.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Structure and](#)

[meaning](#)

[World views](#)

[Competing](#)

[world views](#)

[Setting and](#)

[meaning](#)

[Style and](#)

[meaning](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

3/6



Definition of 'worldview'

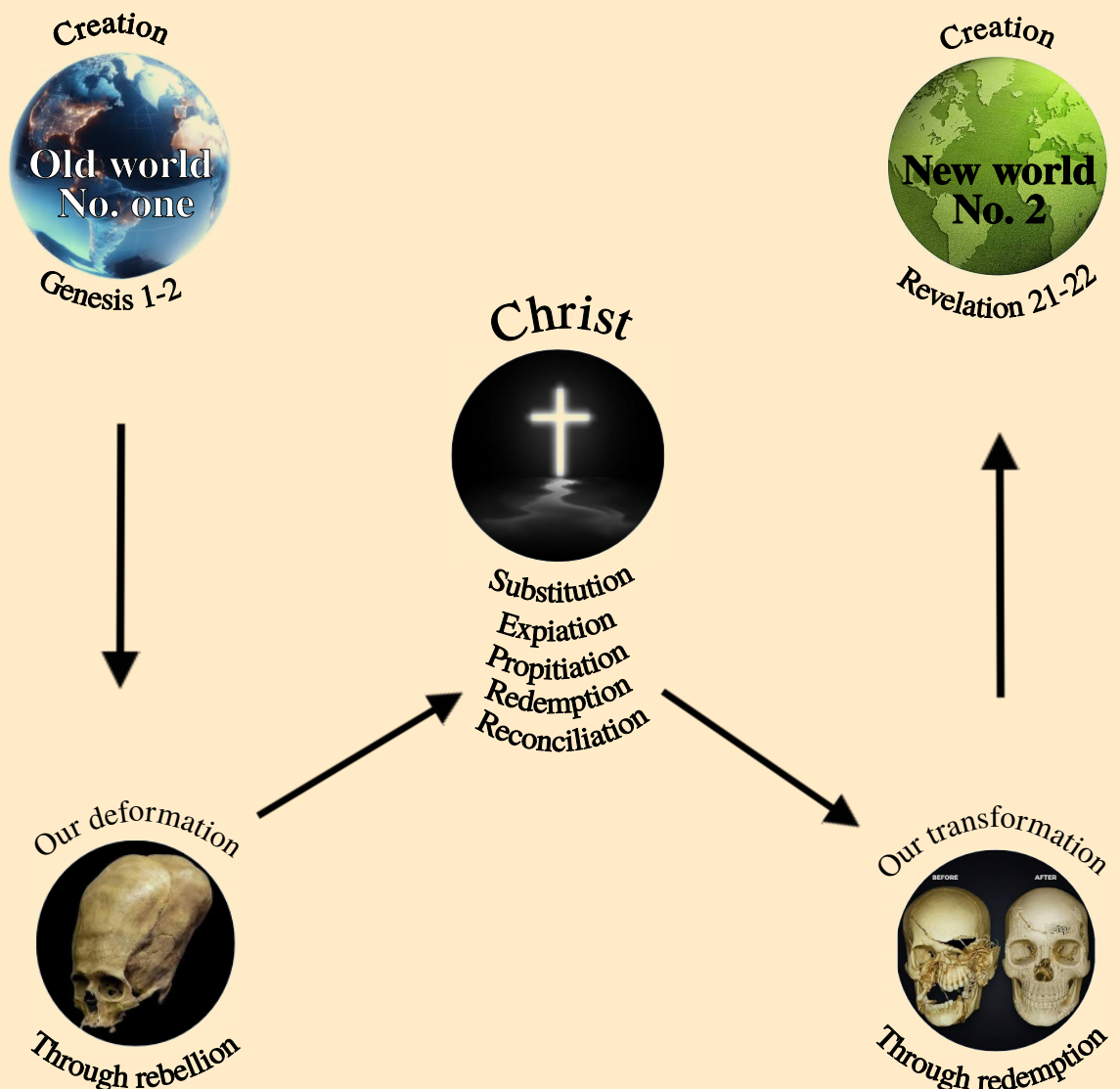
The word “worldview” is the English translation of the German word “Weltanschauung.” It comes from the field of philosophy and literally means an all-inclusive “vision of the world”, that is, a global outlook on life and the world. It includes the way in which an individual will evaluate things, using ideas, ideals, views, feelings, judgments, values, will, choice, that in consequence determine how one will behave and act. Each worldview is always a personal one. More precisely, one’s worldview is not something exterior, coming from outside the subject, instead, it develops together with the subject. Its emergence and growth are conditioned through the alignment of the subject’s interior and exterior worlds ([Alessiato](#)).

What is a 'biblical worldview'

The operative adjective here is *biblical* and when added to *worldview*, the combined phrase *biblical worldview* sets it solidly in the Word of God, and separates it from every other worldview. In the German definition above, worldview is always personal, but a biblical worldview is not only personal, it's collective, because there is only one of them. Every believer has only one worldview available to them for acceptance. The more grounded you are in a biblical worldview, the less likely you are to partially or completely adopt assumptions found in other worldviews ([Kidder](#)).

God's two-worlds view'

If I asked you to give an overview of the Bible, whether in words or images, you would have the essence of a biblical worldview. If you asked me to do the same exercise, I would use images as follows.



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Structure and meaning](#)

[World views](#)

[Competing world views](#)

[Setting and meaning](#)

[Style and meaning](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

4/6



Biblical worldview' continued

Viewing the Bible as a whole (Old and New Testaments together), God provides us with a perfect example of the inclusio or sandwich. The graphic on page 3 shows that the Bible begins with God creating our current world (Genesis 1-2), and ends with God creating a new one (Revelation 21-22). Why create a new one when He said seven times that the first one was good? The answer to that is that mankind who was given dominion over it made it a mess. He became spiritually deformed through his rebellion against God's clear command. However, through the redemptive cross work of Christ, God transforms human beings, He creates them anew, and will refurbish the present world, renovating it better than it was before.

Does that mean that mankind won't be privileged to populate it? No, but only people who have been transformed by the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world, get a free pass to citizenship of God's new world.

And that, is the grand narrative of the Bible. Its theme and story is how we get from one creation to another and your part, and mine in it. Moreover, all the gorgeous details along the way are provided in the filling in the centre.

Competing worldviews

[Sangwa](#), in looking our world since 2000 through a 'biblical worldview', he described the picture as *a cacophony of ideologies*. At the core is our struggle between relativistic humanism and transcendent truth, and he wonders if humanity's "there is no absolute truth," will win, or will we recognise God's higher Authority? For the believer, there ought to be no contest,

It's true that the ancient biblical world remains relevant to modern life. For example, its concepts of impartial justice, equality before the law, and human rights are grounded in the Hebrew Bible's Law and prophetic literatures. The stories of Israel's displacement, and societal upheaval through exile and return provide a way for collective recovery during modern crises. The human experiences described in Hebrew poetry, and wisdom literature, provide a timeless vocabulary of triumph for occasions of human loneliness, anxiety, grief, lament, and for us in our world where we are drowning in new technologies and information the Bible gives us the wisdom of which we have been deprived.

As the graphic on page 3 of my image of a 'biblical worldview' shows, Christ is the central figure in God's view of the world. You could argue that it is a view of two world views, not just one. Our current world has been deformed from God's 'good' world through the sin of disobedience to His command.

So, God's unique hope for this world is Jesus Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), and by Him, God will bring a new heaven and earth free of all spiritual, physical and mental deformities that plague us now. It's on the horizon, and it's the only worldview to be engrossed with, and the only one worth publicising to a world lost in *a cacophony of ideologies*.

I leave worldviews at this point to consider a Bible's text setting and style as crucial to correct interpretation and understanding alongside its structure.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Structure and meaning](#)

[World views](#)

[Competing world views](#)

[Setting and meaning](#)

[Style and meaning](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

5/6



Setting & meaning

In addition to structure, a literary work comes from a time, geographical and topographical places including roads, hills, mountains, valleys, rivers and seas, flora, fauna, geology, climate and cultural and political settings, which we need to understand to correctly interpret the biblical text. So, the Bible is set in the ancient Middle East, in the land of Israel and the surrounding countries, such as Egypt, Moab (now Jordan), Syria, Lebanon, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Asia Minor (now Turkey), Greece and Italy.

The biblical writers used the physical spaces of the biblical world to communicate their message, and these landscapes are the context for images, metaphors, similes, narratives, psalms, prophecies, and parables. The Bible land magnifies the Bible, and to understand its landscapes is to be satisfyingly enlightened of its meaning and truth.

In brief, we need to understand that Scripture's imagery originated in lived human experience, in the culture, customs, and lands of the ancient Middle East, far removed in time and place from our own. This highlights the importance of injecting ourselves into that culture and customs to be effective interpreters of Scripture.

Style & meaning

Finally, a note about the importance of recognising an author's writing style. In the field of fashion, style comes from the choices people make of their clothes. So, in writing, style comes from the choices writers make with the words they use. Style is the author's thumbprint—a unique and indelible mark on the voice and personality of the work ([Glatch](#)).

Also, [Bandy](#) (2010) says that the meaning of a written text is intimately related to both genre and structure. 'Genre' (pronounced like jonra) essentially means the literary clothes that hang on the structure, or in other words, the author's writing style.

Specifically, the author's style is the manner in which ideas are presented. This artistic dimension includes words, sentences, tone, imagery, symbols, similes, metaphors, allegories, points of view, figurative language, mood, narrative, history, biography, figures of speech, poetry, wisdom, dramatic literature, short stories and tales, prophecy, apocalyptic, gospel, oratory, and letters.

The 66 books of the Bible were written in different literary styles. If we don't discern the style of a book, or part thereof, we will miss out on the author's intention. Almost half of the Bible is narrative or story, the most universal form of human communication, that takes events and puts them in chronological order with interesting characters for the reader or listener to detect the author's meaning and purpose.

The next largest style in the Bible is poetry, which accounts for about one third, and uses colourful images and metaphor to help us see the world from a different perspective. That's why there are songs, and pithy wisdom sayings that best express the imagination and emotions of the writers.

Finally, the remaining quarter is prose, which is a way of writing that matches how people speak. Here we will find speeches, letters, or essays to persuading the audience with logical reasoning. Good examples of this are the Law, the wisdom literature, and the New testament letters.

And, to make things more complicated, but interesting, some writers combine literary genres. All in all, the Holy Spirit Who oversees the words of God written in the words of men recognises that we have different preferences in our reading. Some readers are verbal, so narrative and prose writings appeal more to them. In contrast, visual readers prefer the image and picture style and so they like poetry, colourful images, metaphor, symbols, and similes.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

[Structure and](#)

[meaning](#)

[World views](#)

[Competing](#)

[world views](#)

[Setting and](#)

[meaning](#)

[Style and](#)

[meaning](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

6/6



Conclusion

We noted that everything has *structure*, and my interest in this introductory sandwich paper is in the structure of texts. *Structure*, or the organisation of ideas that an author brings to his work, is one of the features that is critical to interpretation.

In biblical texts, one particular structural technique favoured by writers is the "inclusio", which is a literary device that frames a body of text with similar beginnings and endings. An "inclusio" is also known as a bracket, an envelope, or a bookend. By using this device, the two outer parts highlight the central theme, informing and shaping the reader's understanding of the middle section. I prefer to call inclusios, colloquially, 'sandwiches'.

One well known example of the "inclusio" is Psalm 8, where the first and last verses are exactly the same: *O self-existing One, our Sovereign, Ruler, our King, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.* The Lord is independent of all for His existence. This is the grand theme. In the centre of the psalm, in the sandwich filling, David shows that all else, creation and even human rulers depend on Him.

Notable, the complete Bible is a sandwich and it provides to us a *biblical worldview* set solidly in the Word of God, and distinct from the myriad of other worldviews competing for our attention and acceptance. For the believer this one and only worldview demands our attention, acceptance, and propagation steering us clear of the world's utter confusion.

In addition to structure, setting and style are factors important to correct understanding of an author's work. '*Setting*' is the use of the physical spaces, the culture, and customs of the ancient Middle East to communicate the Bible's message.

Finally, '*style*' is the author's thumbprint, a unique and indelible mark on the voice and personality of the work derived from the choices writers make with the words they use. An appreciation of both setting and style are critical to a correct understanding of the author's intended meaning.

References

Alessiato, Elena Paola Carola. What is a Worldview? Some Suggestions from the History of the Concept, *Negotiation Journal* (September 30, 2022) 38 (3): 397–404. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12404>.

Bandy, A.S. (2009). The Layers of the Apocalypse: An Integrative Approach to Revelation's Macrostructure. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 31, 469 - 4.

Glatch, Sean WRITING STYLES: WHAT IS STYLE IN WRITING? December 12, 2022; <https://writers.com/writing-styles>.

Kidder, S. Joseph and Campbell Weakley, Katelyn, "Worldviews Transformed: How God and His People Can Change Worldview" (2022). Faculty Publications. 4571. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/4571>.

Sangwa, Sixbert. Faith, Society, and the 21st Century: A Biblical Worldview Analysis of Global Trends (2000-2025), *Open Journal of Stigmatized Knowledge & Suppressed Discourses*, DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16841368.