

Endorsements

Just a few decades ago, Christians generally assumed that ontology was safe and secure. And yet, just as the twenty-first century arrived, believers had to quickly comprehend that the moral and ideological rebellions of the age were now undermining being itself. If the sexual revolution wasn't enough to awaken Christians to an ontological crisis, the transgender revolution arrived just in time to make the crisis clear. This important book by David Schrock underlines the fact that a biblical ontology, grounded in God's creation of the world, is fundamental to Christian faithfulness. A biblical ontology offers the only way to escape the deliberate confusions of the age. David Schrock's new book is both timely and urgently needed.

— **R. Albert Mohler, Jr.**
President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, KY

Schrock carefully and thoroughly answers some of the most important questions any human will ask: What is God? What is man and woman? What is marriage? What is family? This book provides the help Christians need to biblically understand *what* God has made in creation and, maybe even more importantly, *for what purpose* he has made us and everything else.

— **Abigail Dodds**
Author, *Bread of Life* and *(A) Typical Woman*

Here's a good book about everything in the universe. It's a book I need right now because I am being lied to about everything all the time. This is a book we all need because of everything precious to us—our children and their future, the church and her mission, our civilization and even civilization itself. David helps us know we are not crazy, helps keep us from going crazy, and gently but firmly corrects where we may have started down a dark path. David's book is about everything but it is not complicated. Beautifully organized, what began as sermons for his church remains as accessible. I'll be giving a copy to my teenagers, my wife who homeschools them, and we'll be reading David's book as a church staff.

— **Trent Hunter**
Pastor for Preaching, Heritage Bible Church
Greer, SC

Few books address the craziness of our cultural moment with as much directness and biblical clarity as Schrock's book. This book addresses some of the most urgent and pressing questions being asked in our culture today with theological skill and pastoral wisdom. While Schrock is a serious scholar, the book is written with an accessible and engaging style is both challenging and refreshing. You won't find any goofy, progressive innovations in this book. What you will find is trustworthy guidance by a skilled pastor through several critical worldview issues. Highly recommend.

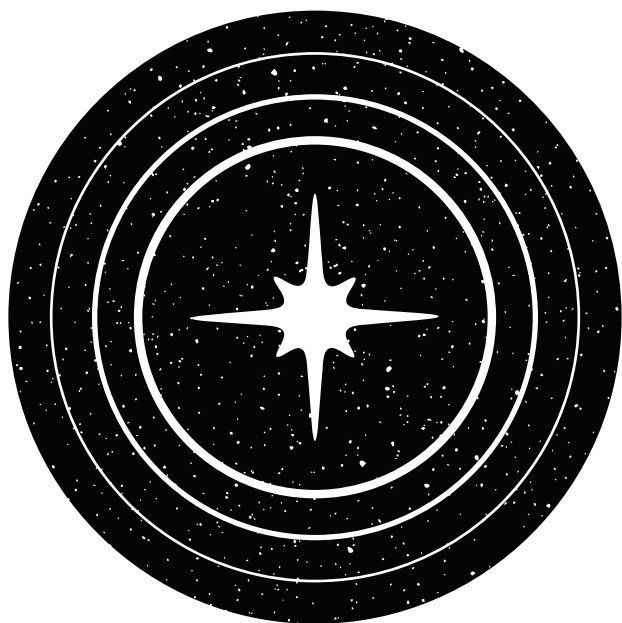
— **Michael Clary**
Lead Pastor, Christ the King Church
Cincinnati, OH

Our culture is rebelling against God's good design for men and women—especially for marriage and sex and the family. In this book David Schrock highlights fundamental truths about God's brilliant design.

— **Andy Naselli**
Lead Pastor, Christ the King Church
Stillwater, MN

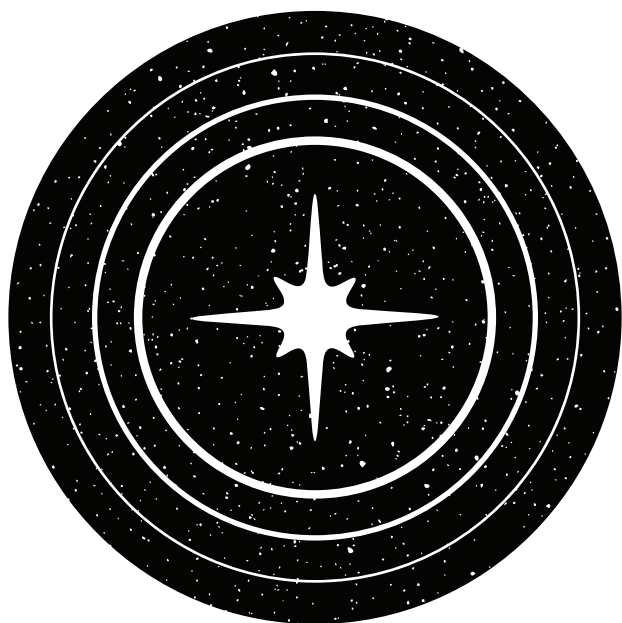
Schrock understands that the most pressing problems facing us today contain profound ontological confusions. What's more, he keenly grasps the central place of anthropology, calling it "the most important doctrine for the twenty-first century." I couldn't agree more. For while past eras were marked by debates about the Trinity, the means of saving grace, and the truthfulness of the Scriptures, ours is an anthropological age. From overzealous animal rights activism to misguided DEI initiatives, from gay "marriage" to transgenderism, from feminism to Marxism, and from abortion on demand to brave new visions of a neuralinked humanity, the West is replete with destructive delusions about the nature of mankind. These cannot and will not be mended until we return to the Lord and his life-giving Word. Schrock shows us the way forward, pointing us back to the beginning of all things and calling Christians to take up the vital business of "is-ness" for the glory of God and the good of the world.

— **Doug Ponder**
Teaching Pastor, Remnant Church
Richmond, VA



THE BUSINESS OF IS-NESS

HOW TO LIVE IN THE
WORLD GOD MADE



THE BUSINESS OF IS-NESS

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WORLD GOD MADE

DAVID SCHROCK

FOREWORD BY STEPHEN J. WELLUM



FOUNDERS
MINISTRIES

The Business of Is-Ness:

How to Live in the World God Made

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Dedication

*To my friends in Cape Coral, Florida;
without them, this book would have no ontology.*

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FOREWORD

EARLY IN my Christian life I was introduced to the work of Francis Schaeffer. Probably the two most significant truths Schaeffer taught me were: first, that our triune God and His authoritative Word is the only ground for the true, the good, and the beautiful; and second, that “ideas have consequences.” Specifically, in regard to the latter, Schaeffer rightly taught that what people believe about God, self, and the world will determine how people live, and that not all ideas are equal. In fact, without individuals and societies building their lives on the truth of God and His spoken Word, not only will the grounding for a humane society be undercut, but human sin will also run rampant, as evidenced in the embrace of all kinds of false ideas. Sadly, these false ideas do not result in life, joy, and happiness, but death, despair, and heartache.

Prophetically, and unfortunately, what Schaeffer taught is precisely what we have witnessed in Western cultures, including the United States. Historically, and due to God’s grace, the West was greatly influenced by Christianity, starting with its spread in the Roman Empire, and then into what we identify today as Europe in the Middle Ages and the Reformation. Because of this influence, the West viewed the true, the good, and the beautiful more in Christian categories. For example, a belief in objective truth was grounded in the God of Scripture as the source and standard of truth and the fact that He had created a world according to His eternal plan. Or a belief in human dignity was grounded in the truth that God had created humans in His image. Or a belief that marriage and the family were the basic building blocks of society was grounded in the fact of God’s creation

of humans as male and female for the purpose of multiplying in order to steward God's created order for His glory and our enjoyment as His covenant creatures.

But with the rise of the Enlightenment, the influence of Christianity began to wane as a slow, gradual worldview shift occurred away from Christian theology in at least two significant areas. First, the Enlightenment rejected a revelation epistemology for human rational autonomy. This resulted in people seeking to interpret all things "from below" (i.e., from the standpoint of finite, fallen, human perspectives independent of Scripture) and no longer "from above" (i.e., from the truth of God's revelation in Scripture). Second, there was a corresponding rejection of trinitarian theism. This was first replaced by deism and then by evolutionary naturalism, which greatly affected how people thought about God, human origins, design, purpose, and significance.

What resulted from these two major shifts of ideas? The West witnessed a rise of competing views against Christianity (e.g., secular humanism, Marxism, existentialism, nihilism), all of which were largely indebted to evolutionary naturalism now combined with a secular-postmodern perspective. Our culture then necessarily embraced competing ideas of reality, including views about who humans are, which has resulted in our present-day confusion, along with a devaluation of humans, a sense of meaninglessness, and growing dystopian visions of reality.

Not surprisingly, with such a shift in thinking, Enlightenment poet Alexander Pope's method for the study of man is now the norm: "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; The proper study of Mankind is Man."¹ But in the Enlightenment's attempt to "liberate" humans from God and His divine revelation (both natural and special), disaster has occurred. In fact, our attempt to understand ourselves "from below" is analogous to what happened to the prodigal son. The prodigal son could only live "free" of his father until his money ran out. Once that happened, he had to return to his father because he could no longer survive apart from him. In a similar way, humans can only follow the advice of Alexander Pope if they continue

1. Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Man," in *Poetical Works*, ed. H. F. Cary (London: Routledge, 1870), 225.

to live off the borrowed capital of Christianity; once we jettison Christian theology, we soon discover that we have just undercut the warrant for our own dignity, value, and significance. In other words, we go morally bankrupt. Sadly, this is precisely what has happened in the West.

Instead of viewing ourselves as created by God, we sought to understand ourselves in terms of an impersonal, blind evolutionary process. But in so doing, if we remained consistent with this naturalistic view, we could no longer view ourselves as creatures of value and significance, but only evolved animals. Thus, over time, people gradually began to admit that humans are not creatures of dignity created by the triune-personal God, but rather products of *impersonal* causes. For a while, people continued to affirm human dignity, along with human rights—while failing to acknowledge that all these truths were borrowed capital from a Christian view of humans and not warranted by their worldview. As people sought to remain consistent with their secular-postmodern view, they ran out of money. Instead, humans were viewed solely as products of the impersonal plus time plus chance. As Paul reminds us in Romans 1, in refusing to acknowledge our Creator we must now explain ourselves solely in terms of created things. But the disastrous consequence of such an explanation is that the metaphysical and epistemological grounding for human value, purpose, meaning, design, reason, love, freedom, justice, etc. now has no basis. Sadly, such truths not only vanish from our thinking, but they also impact our lives.

From a Christian view, the West's rejection of God and His Word is "tragically ironic." First, it is "ironic" because, beginning with the Enlightenment to our present day, it has been fashionable to argue that "we have come of age," that we have "freed" ourselves from the "burden" of viewing ourselves in light of Christian theology. Indeed, even the moniker "the Enlightenment" is evidence of the hubris and rebelliousness of this era's intellectual thought. The term assumes that the previous era was "dark," but now, with our rejection or reinterpretation of Christianity, the "lights" have been turned on. Before us is a new era of "freedom," "liberation," and "discovery" of the unlimited potential of man—a potential that will ultimately result in a utopian future. Such was the claim of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the French Revolution, and Karl Marx, along with many others.

Yet the irony is that this era, up to our own day, has not resulted in liberation and a utopian future, but one disaster after another. In the twentieth century alone, we have witnessed multiple wars and the destruction of nearly one hundred million people at the hands of such “utopian” ideologies. The irony is that this way of thinking failed to realize that if one rejects the triune God of Scripture, all is lost, including our understanding of ourselves! It is simply not possible to warrant the human rights that a biblical view of humans alone provides without *also* embracing the biblical truth that humans are God’s created image-bearers.

However, this is exactly what occurred in the West and its embrace of the Enlightenment mentality as worked out in both modernity and postmodernity. The West sought to liberate itself from the “restrictions” of Christian theology while simultaneously borrowing from it, at least for a time. The novelist Walker Percy notes this irony by observing that the conventional wisdom of twentieth-century thought about humans consisted of two components, the first owing to modern science and the other owing to Christianity. On the one hand, secular thought sought to understand man “as an organism in an environment, a sociological unit, an encultured creature, a psychological dynamism endowed genetically like other organisms with needs and drives, who through evolution has developed strategies for learning and surviving.”² On the other hand, secular thought viewed man as “somehow endowed with certain other unique properties which he does not share with other organisms—with certain inalienable rights, reason, freedom, and an intrinsic dignity—and as a consequence the highest value to which a democratic society can be committed is the respect of the sacredness and worth of the individual.”³ But, as Percy notes, the problem with believing these two propositions simultaneously is that they are “radically incoherent and cannot be seriously professed without even more serious consequences.”⁴

This is why the Enlightenment morphed into modernity and postmodernity. It maintained the first proposition but discarded the second. In so doing, it jettisoned the concept of human dignity, value, and significance.

2. Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Picador, 1975), 20.

3. Percy, *Message in the Bottle*, 20.

4. Percy, *Message in the Bottle*, 20.

In many ways, postmodern thinkers have walked the path of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who not only proclaimed the “death of God” but also the “death of man”—because even he knew that both stand and fall together. This is why people such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, given their embrace of the “death of God,” insist that human nature is not “designed” or “ordered” but completely malleable, even questioning whether humans have any value or dignity at all other than what we subjectively construct.

But second, from a Christian view, the irony of humans rejecting God and thus losing our beauty and dignity is not merely ironic, it’s also horribly “tragic.” In our rebellion against God and seeking to understand ourselves solely “from below,” the Enlightenment project has not resulted in its promised liberation and utopia. Instead, it has resulted in futility, despair, and meaninglessness, which has also opened the door to totalitarianism. Why? Because, as Francis Schaeffer taught us, ideas have consequences. Our attempt to understand humans apart from God ultimately results in our own self-destruction. Mark it well: Any attempt to understand ourselves apart from the truth of God and His Word and all that it teaches inevitably strips from us our dignity, reduces us to the products of blind impersonal forces, and allows us to embrace ideas that are literally crazy since, at their heart, they deny the reality of God and His created order. In fact, regarding the latter, we must never forget this point: Wrong ideas never remain theoretical. Inevitably and disastrously, people act on what they believe, and this is where the tragedy is even more pronounced. All around us, we see the terrible fallout of false ideas in the destruction of human life, male and female, marriage, the family, and the basis of human society itself.

This is an important time for Christians. We have an extraordinary opportunity to speak the truth of God’s Word to our world with precision and force. Our world is on a collision course with reality, and it’s only the truth of God’s Word and the power of the gospel that can address it. But sadly, just as our culture as drifted from the influence of Christianity, so the evangelical church has accommodated to the culture, and thus lost her prophetic voice. What is needed is for the church to return to the truth of God’s Word in repentance and faith in order first to speak rightly about God and

His glory and the wonder of the gospel, but also to enable the church to be the church and to live out the truth of Scripture before a watching world. What our world desperately needs to hear and see is the truth of God's Word brought to bear on every area of life, and for the church to model the truth in every area of our lives. In our marriages, families, workplaces, and so on, we need Christians living out the truth of God's Word, thus bearing witness to the truth of Scripture in word and deed.

But where should the church turn to receive help and instruction on these matters? Obviously, we turn to Scripture as our final authority, but we also need faithful teachers of Scripture to help us apply Scripture to our present day. And one such faithful pastor, teacher, and theologian is David Schrock and *this* helpful book. In this work, David masterfully helps the church to return to first things. He is convinced, and I agree, that what the church needs is a good dose of biblical reality, which means instruction regarding God and His created order. Given the loss of Christian theology in our society, and even in the church, the truth of who God is and the nature of His created order is crucial to return to. We need to be reminded of what it means to be created as God's image, males and females, what marriage and the family is, and how this must be lived out in the church and society. In contrast to the thinking of our lost age, we must return to a proper grounding of these key areas in a correct understanding of the doctrine of creation. In all of these areas, David's work is a sure guide to help the church think through these basic truths that are foundational to Scripture, systematic theology, and our understanding of the gospel.

As David makes very clear, we as the church need to return to first things. As we do, and truly live out the truths of Scripture in our lives, our gracious triune God may see fit again to impact our society. Our first concern is always for the glory of God and the building up of the church. But it's only as the church consistently bears witness to the gospel in word and deed that there is hope for some sense of sanity to return to our society. Our task is to bear witness to Christ Jesus our Lord and to live out lives of faithfulness before Him. As we do, and consistently proclaim and live the truth of God's Word, we may see God once bring sanity back to a nation that is determined to pump its head up against reality. But if not, Christians

need to know the truth of God's Word so that we are not "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14 NIV). My prayer is that David Schrock's helpful guide to biblical ontology—i.e., reality as God created and designed it to be—will be read by many so that the church will be better equipped to live in our present day for God's glory and to continue to be salt and light to our poor, lost world that so desperately needs to see the truth of the gospel lived out in the church.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of making many books there is no end . . .

Ecclesiastes 12:12a

EVERY BOOK has backstory. And as I begin with a word of acknowledgement, I'd like to share the backstory of this book and how it came into being.

In the summer of 2022, I preached an eight-sermon series called “The Business of Is-Ness.” Reflecting on the critical challenges of our day, I felt the need to help define some terms and provide some biblical basics for our church family. Occoquan Bible Church is located just outside of Washington, DC, and while our people are solidly committed to God’s Word, they regularly face challenges imposed by government agencies, DEI strategies, LGBT+ affirmations, and other liberal policies that deny human nature. To that end, I took eight weeks to preach these sermons. And it about killed me.

Our church is committed to biblical exposition, so this topical series was both different and difficult—for me and our church. While each sermon had a supporting text, it also engaged a number of cultural issues and drew applications from the Bible to help us think like Christians about what the world is and ought to be. Along the way, a few sermons ruffled a few feathers and challenged a few paradigms. All things being equal, however, the sermons were well-received and encouraged many members to think more biblically about the world we inhabit.

Fast forward to December 2022, when I taught at the Institute of Public Theology (Cape Coral, Florida). There I incorporated the sermons into a section I taught on theological anthropology, and as I mentioned the sermon series in passing, Randy Starkey suggested that those sermons be converted into a book. Thus, if anyone is to thank (or blame!) for this book, it is the publication director at Founders Ministries. Indeed, by way of his prompting, the spark was lit. Only, this manuscript would not have come to life without the help of Sarah Ascol, who took the sermon manuscripts and turned them into a workable first draft. Eliminating hundreds of ellipses in my sermon notes . . . she put together a draft, which became the foundation of a manuscript. Indeed, without her labors to convert points into prose, the sermon notes would have remained files on my computer. Thus, I am grateful to God for Sarah and Randy, both in their initiative and assistance, as well as their patience and persistence.

After getting the manuscript and asking for help tracking down some resources, I took the time to revise the whole thing. Thus, what you have before you is not just sermon notes; it is a book to help Christians understand the way God made the world. While the chapters are thorough, they are not overly academic or technical. Instead, they gather up the pieces of what American churches have faced over the last few generations and offer some explanations on where bad ideas have come from. Then, each chapter will provide breadcrumbs that lead you back to the Bread of Life, the Word of Truth, the God who was and is and is to come.

Indeed, my hope for this book is that it gives the reader confidence to stand unmoved in an ever-changing world. And as I begin, I must give thanks to God for all those who made this book possible and who have helped me to stand firm in the faith. It would not have come into existence without our local church and their love for the truth, the elders of Occoquan Bible Church who encouraged the work on that sermon series, the friends in Cape Coral who made this book possible, and, finally, my ever-supportive wife and children, who encourage me in my writing and also laugh at me for writing so much.

Additionally, I must acknowledge a host of other friends and fellow authors who have helped me to think about the world and everything

in it. You will meet many of them as you read this book and look at the footnotes. But before then, I want to mention a few in particular. Trent Hunter, Steve Wellum, Brad Green, Ardel Caneday, Kevin McClure, Mike Law, Nicholas Piotrowski, Andy Naselli, Doug Ponder, Colin Smothers, Michael Carlino, Tom Ascol, Andrew Walker, Michael Clary, Joe Rigney, and countless other friends and authors for *Christ Over All* have shaped my thinking on countless issues related to ontology. In your writings, text threads, and personal conversations, you have helped me to think carefully about so many issues found in this book. I am grateful to God for all of you, and I pray that our partnership in the gospel will continue unabated until Christ makes all things new.

INTRODUCTION

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God,
“who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

Revelation 1:8

“IT DEPENDS on what the meaning of the word ‘is’ is.”

Those infamous words, uttered by Bill Clinton under oath in 1998, should have told us that the world and everything in it was already succumbing to the deconstructive forces of postmodernism. Postmodernism claims that meaning is no longer found in what a human author intends or what the Author of life declares. Rather, meaning is decided by individuals (or groups) who interpret—or in most cases reinterpret—the words of others.

In colleges across the country postmodern ideas have sprung to life since the 1960s, and by 1998 such verbal deconstructions were emerging in the public square. Bill Clinton’s elusive response to a question about his relations with Monica Lewinsky was not abnormal for a culture celebrating transgression (think: the hippies of the 1960s), raised on MTV (think: the teens of the 1980s), or enslaved to self-expression instead of submission to the truth (every generation since World War II).

Fast-forward twenty-five years, add two decades of social media, a handful of contested elections, one global pandemic, and endless woke crusades in public schools and city streets, and it is not just language that has come under assault; it is everything that God upholds by the word of His power. To be certain, Christ the Lord reigns in heaven. But on earth, all is not well. In our day, cultural elites can’t even figure out what a man is, why women’s sports should only include women, or why children should not be exposed to drag queens at the public library.

In a word, the world has gone mad. And its insanity began when words could mean anything, or nothing, or one thing today and something different tomorrow.

Many have rightly claimed that those who define the terms decide the turf. This means that, in our day, we are at war for the dictionary. As Adam was charged to name the animals (Gen. 2:19–20), so we are watching Adam’s heirs renaming everything. Only, instead of naming the world as it is, the god of this world has convinced the masses to remake the world in their own image. And then to tweet about it!

Instead of receiving God’s world as it is and giving thanks for what we have, (post)moderns are trying to create new worlds based on every whim of fancy. Proudly, they declare that old-fashioned pronouns can’t get in the way. “This is our world,” they chant with blue hair and bluer souls.

As Christians called to salvation and commissioned to bring the light of the gospel to all nations, we cannot sit back and watch. Instead, we must take up our Bibles and hack to pieces the lies that are destroying our neighbors and sending people to hell. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5,

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ . . .* (emphasis added).

To this end of destroying every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, we must learn afresh what Scripture means when it says that God made us in His image and that He made us male and female (Gen. 1:26–28). To do that, we must also learn what this world is, what humans are, what human bodies are for, and why all of this matters. Even more, we must learn why one human or many cannot hit the “reset” button on the ways of God’s world without doing “irreversible damage,” as Abigail Shrier has put it in her book by the same title.¹

1. Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2021). Shrier’s book is necessary reading to combat the forces of transgenderism in our day.

Indeed, Shrier, who is not a Christian, is one of many moderns who are waking up to the fact that our postmodern world is out of control. And more than out of control, it is positively destructive, as an endless array of choices has made anything possible—including the absolute denial of human nature itself. If we are going to see change—whether culturally, legislatively, or politically—it will require Christians and non-Christians to arm themselves with arguments to stand up against the insanity that celebrates doctors who mutilate the healthy bodies of children. Thankfully, by the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025, it seems that some common sense is being recovered, but more work needs to be done.

For Christians especially, many truths need to be reclaimed. For all that Shrier gets right in her book, we must remember that no damage is entirely “irreversible” for the God who is able to raise the dead. There is hope, forgiveness, and the promise of an unmolested resurrection body for those who trust in Jesus Christ. The gospel promises that God can and will make all things new. This is the new creation that stands at the end of time and is actually being unveiled in our own day, as men and women made in God’s image repent of their self-willed idolatry and bow the knee to King Jesus. Such repentance *is* a sign of resurrection life, and it means that nothing is eternally irreversible for those who are raised to life with Christ.

That said, the damage that Shrier identifies is manifold. It is the reason why this book exists and why Christians who know the God of redemption are called to remember the God of creation. Indeed, the doctrine of creation, with all that it entails, is a doctrine in need of recovery today. With politicians, universities, and entertainers distorting reality and redefining what “is” is, Christians have an obligation to know and declare what *really* is. In philosophy this is called metaphysics or ontology (see chapter 1). But in popular parlance, with a touch of poetic license, I am arguing that Is-Ness is our business.

As we worship the God who revealed Himself as “I AM” (Ex. 3:14), the God who is, was, and is to come (Rev. 1:4, 8), we believe that the world in which we live is not *our* creation; it is *His*. Thus, we are called to live by His standards in the world that He has made. Yet affirming God as creator is not exactly the same thing as affirming creation as His. The former posits God

as the source of creation, but the latter affirms the goodness of the world He has made *as He has made it*. This is an intricate nuance, but one that possesses a large impact.

God has made the world a certain way, and those who are made in His image must learn that way and live accordingly. Scripture, as special revelation, is the place to go to best understand this way of living. But the special revelation found in Scripture resonates with and reinforces the general revelation found in nature. In this book, this is what I hope to do: With popular and biblical terms, rather than technical and philosophical terms, I want to show what this world is, according to what God's Word says.

In one sense, therefore, this is a book of philosophy. But it is not a book that requires a knowledge of Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle. There is a place for that kind of book, and many who are trained in philosophy may look upon this treatment as academically insufficient. That's fine. I am not writing for the guild. I am writing for the faithful Christian who has never read a book of philosophy, but who in his love for God is also a lover of wisdom—the true wisdom being Jesus Christ Himself (Col. 2:3).

Indeed, philosophy is simply a love of wisdom—*phileō* (love) + *sophia* (wisdom)—and in this way, all Christians are philosophers. As followers of Christ, when we have ideas and questions about *what is* (ontology), *how we know* what is (epistemology), and *how to live righteously* in light of what is (ethics), we are participating in philosophy. Which is to say, we are simply exercising what it means to be human.

Still, because the definition of humanity is under threat today, we are not able to simply absorb wisdom from the world. Instead, as the world has gone mad trying remake itself in its own convoluted image, we need to think carefully about what “is” is. That is where this book comes in. It invites you, with an open Bible, to consider how God created the world, even as it exposes how fallen humanity has wrongly attempted to do the same.

This is the Business of Is-Ness. And in the next nine chapters, it is my aim to answer nine questions that relate to various aspects of God's world and cosmic realities that are under threat today.

1. What is ontology?
2. What is God?
3. What is the cosmos?
4. What is humanity?
5. What is the body for?
6. What is marriage?
7. What is a family?
8. What is a man? What is a woman?
9. What is the church?

Again, my answers to these questions will not satisfy academic philosophers. But, Lord willing, they will serve the church, for that is where this book was born—in a sermon series preached at my church.

In the spring of 2023, I preached eight sermons on these very topics. This book is the fruit of that labor. From their inception, therefore, these biblical reflections were not intended to be exhaustive or technical. They were intended to serve the church I pastor and to help the members stand firm in a rapidly disintegrating world. As Ephesians 6:11 calls Christians to “put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil,” this book aims to do the same.

In every generation, spiritual warfare has consisted of standing against the devil and his schemes. Today, those schemes include more than temptations to do evil; they include a full-fledged denial of creation and a satanic assault on humanity, the human body, gender, sex, marriage, and the family. In response to such “irreversible damage,” the church must stand and declare that such damage is real but not irredeemable. Christ still reigns, and His Word remains true. And so, with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we must stand and declare what “is” *is*. Or to put it differently, we must give ourselves to the Business of Is-Ness.

That business begins by learning something about ontology.

