

# How to resist the redefinition of everything

## Psalm 8

*David C. Dixon*

**Introduction:** We're living in a cultural moment when the consensus of what it means to be human is shattering. In fact, you could say that humanity is going through its most serious identity crisis since the fall into sin. Now the Bible's truth claims have never been disproved – challenged, yes – but the Bible has outlived all its challengers and overcome all its detractors. The question is whether today's Christians will survive the latest onslaught of redefinitions that postmodern culture seeks to impose on humanity. In this "age of post-truth" and postmodern relativism, we need to be keenly aware of the culture around us and its redefinitions: **humanity** is nothing but a social construct, no longer "made in God's image" (that's just religious jargon, an ancient myth); **sin** is no longer sinful (it has been canceled in the popular mind); **sexuality** is a personal choice, no longer related to biology (that's another outdated social construct, very restrictive of my freedom); and **Christianity** is nothing more than an outdated cultural "metanarrative" that has outlived its relevance and usefulness. So how do we resist the aggressiveness of these redefinitions crashing into our society like a tsunami?! Do we realize the seriousness of this revolution?

A key aspect of the **biblical worldview** is letting our Creator tell us who we are (God's anthropology), clarifying the depths of the pit humanity has fallen into through our rebellion (God's diagnosis of our condition), and explaining what He has done to provide us a way out of the fiercest dilemma we face (in the Gospel of Jesus). **Psalm 8** exemplifies the lessons God longs to teach us: **vv. 1-2** tell us who God is: Yahweh the Lord, true majesty, true glory, the only praiseworthy one; innocent children recognize Him for who He is. **V. 3** tells us who the real Owner is – all of creation belongs to Him, our Creator and Sustainer, the true Power and Source of everything. **V. 4** tells us humanity's place in the universe – though we're so insignificant and small, yet how treasured we are in God's eyes: that's our true worth! **Vv. 5-8** tell us the mission God had in mind for us from the beginning: we're His crowning creation, intended to be caretakers of everything He made, which of course we failed at miserably. Hebrews 2 applies these verses to Jesus because He truly fulfilled our vocation, even to the point of suffering death on behalf of all of us; that's our rescue, and this is God's revealed truth! If you don't anchor yourself to this truth, rehearsing it and renewing your vision of it regularly, your mind will be invaded by the lies that permeate everything in our world, and you will be dislodged from the **only safe place in the world** – God's reign over your heart and mind!

Luke Greenwood is the lead singer for a rock band called The Unrest, and European director for a mission organization dedicated to reaching the global youth culture for Jesus. He claims there are seven lies that youth today generally believe that are distorting their perception of reality and threatening their future with disaster:

**1) We can only be sure of what we see (materialism).** So we can only be certain of things we can touch, buy, or google. Anything beyond that is uncertain, nobody knows for sure. This means the biggest questions in life, like who I am, where I came from, why I'm here, have no real answers! What is my destiny? Is there a God who cares? Does life have any meaning or purpose? No one can give

definitive answers to these questions, which produces anxiety and insecurity about life's most important issues! But in fact, all there is to life can never be reduced to a test tube!

**2) We're here by accident.** This idea underlies the whole postmodern worldview: if nobody can answer the big questions of life, then life really must be empty and meaningless. So there's no bigger reason for living than just enjoying whatever pleasure I can get out of life. This is the "religion" of the postmodern world: there is no big purpose. And how do people deal with this vacuum? They turn to another lie ...

**3) Everything is gonna be ok.** You just need to find a hobby, discover your passion, enjoy your life and whatever brings you pleasure. [Sounds like Richard Dawkins' clever adage posted on British buses some years ago: *"There's probably no god. So stop worrying and enjoy your life."*] Or if you find that "right person" for you, then you pursue that relationship or the career that fulfills you – and everything will be ok. The problem is when crises arise (whether pandemic, war, personal tragedy) and there's no ground to stand on, because the truth is that everything is NOT ok. The resulting insecurity often leads to addictions of all kinds, in effect, attempts to feel ok: social media and video games, pornography, constant entertainment (inside the church as well as outside). And all of these serve as effective roadblocks that keep people from seeking more deeply whether there might be real answers to their anxieties.

**4) I can be whoever I want to be.** This idea permeates every educational and social media today, and it's packaged as if it meant *freedom for all*: "you can be whoever you choose to be." It sounds like we've been liberated, but in fact it's the heaviest burden this generation has to carry. If I can't know whether there is a God, I cannot know who I am. So it's like being told there are millions of options and nobody can tell you which one is right for you; nobody can impose their agenda on you or their criteria. No one can even serve as a reference point for you or give you a standard of right and wrong, so just figure it all out on your own ... which produces lostness, confusion, bewilderment, and terrible mistakes! It makes young people suicidal because they don't have adequate criteria for defining who they are.

**5) It doesn't matter what you believe.** If there is no God, if we're only a cosmic accident, if everything is relative and there's no absolute truth, you can make up your own story as you go along, invent your own version of reality, and follow your own rules! You are free to think whatever you like – and also susceptible **to every lie** that comes along! Every scam! You have no criteria! This means this generation has no anchor, no firm foundation, no security against the storms of life, no refuge against sorrow and heartache. They're being thrown to the wolves, lost in the labyrinth of religious ideas, false gods, agnosticism. Of course it matters what you believe! It influences everything you do!

**6) Love is just a passing feeling (this generation can't define love).** So love is not a reality that helps hold you in place, not a commitment that gives you security and reassures you of your true worth. As a result, people today don't know how to have real relationships – everything becomes "fluid," precarious, fragile! They don't know how to belong any more! And without deep human relationships that help me feel secure and loved, the world is a very cold inhuman place! The suffering is unbearable, and again the "way out" is often suicide.

**7) "To find God you have to be religious."** Most in this generation consider that's not a good option, because they don't identify with their parents' church or find meaning in the religious traditions they grew up with. They hear biblical guidelines as "hate speech" and exclusive truth claims sound like arrogance. They see religion as creating barriers between people. But at the same time this generation is spiritually hungry, with a deep longing for meaning and purpose; they want to belong to something worthwhile, something bigger than themselves, but don't know how. They want a better world, would like to be a part of changing things for the better. But without clear guidelines, without fixed reference points and solid beliefs, they have no clue as to how to make a real difference. What is the solution?

**Antidote:** Begin by knowing *where* this is all coming from! Cicero (Roman statesman, scholar, and philosopher) wrote: *“Not to know what happened before you were born is to remain a child forever.”* In other words, to be trapped in childish ignorance regarding history is to be very susceptible to the deceivers! Communism placed a heavy emphasis on conquering the **minds of youth** because they didn't really know their history lessons well, and with their impressionable minds and eager idealism, it was easy to dupe them. In the same way the revisionists today are changing the history books to read according to the most radical perspective, resulting in a **collective loss of historical memory**: losing touch with our shared cultural past, which has a devastating effect on your future! In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Deism was trying to **redefine God** without any input from the Bible (He's the big watchmaker who sets the world in motion like a giant watch and then leaves it on its own – He never interferes with the machinery). The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment would try to **redefine reason and authority** (human logic could never reach God, therefore all “God-talk” was considered illegitimate, just a power play). The 19<sup>th</sup>-century would try to **redefine reality** with movements such as Marxism (economic forces are in charge; no room for religion!), Darwinism (naturalistic forces are in charge; the Bible's view is unscientific), Liberalism (human forces are in charge, showing how the Bible is unreliable, full of myths). The 20<sup>th</sup>-century sought to **redefine life itself** in terms of science and materialism, existentialism and nihilism (“anything non-material is not real”). So what's happening today is simply the fruit of that growing snowball of lies that has been coming at us like an avalanche down through the centuries!

**George Orwell** warned the West about these dangers in his novel *1984* (written in 1949): he wrote about a totalitarian regime set on strict control of public opinion and the media ... to the point that they invented “Newspeak”: a purposefully ambiguous and confusing language with limited grammar and vocabulary intended to diminish the range of thought (no freedom of conscience). The main character, who at first worked for the government, had to use “double-think”: “to know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancel out, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it.” In other words, the government redefined everything in terms of their ideology and stigmatized every other form of thought. Exactly what's going on in today's society! So how do we resist?!

**Our Creator wants to teach us who we are**, and He does this not just with words but with actions! The most powerful being in the universe came to us personally and fully lived out the grace and truth of God in a human life, seeking to show us the way of love, even under the most unfavorable conditions. Humanity's response? It reflects the most hideous moment in all of human history, our most horrendous failure: we put the Judge of the universe on trial, sentenced the Author of Life to death, gave the King of the universe a mock coronation (thorns) and a fake enthronement (cross), ridiculing instead of praising Him, scoffing instead of confessing Him. And His response to us? Kindness! He returned good for our evil! He entered into the very depths of our human tragedy, took the burden of our failures into Himself, let us blame Him for everything, all our misery, took it on the chin from us, and never stopped forgiving and loving us even as He died the disgraceful death of a slave! But His life was too strong for death to hold Him – He rose from the dead (over 500 witnesses). The God of Truth wants to format our hearts with this Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Good News that He put up with that awful rebellion of ours in His face ... out of love! And He promises that the same power that was at work in Him enabling Him to forgive and overcome is available to us in His name. The God of Truth and Kindness wants to format your heart and mind with the right definition of everything in our world! He wants to plant the mind of Christ in you and teach you to build yourself up on His words of life and hope! Won't you call on Jesus as Lord right now?!