

# **The Big Picture: Developing a Christian Worldview**

*The Ecumenical Retreat!*  
**All Saints Episcopal Church  
St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
River Oaks Baptist Church**

But there are some people, nevertheless – and I am one of  
them – who think that  
the most practical and important thing about a person is  
still his or her view of the universe. ...  
We think the question is not whether [one's] theory of the  
cosmos affects matters,  
but whether, in the long run, anything else affects them.”  
– G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics*

Laity Lodge  
May 13-15, 2005  
*David Naugle*

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**Introduction:**

**Three poems!**

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,  
But often in the din of strife,  
**There rises an unspeakable desire  
After the knowledge of our buried life:**  
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force  
In tracking out our true, original course;  
A longing to inquire  
Into the mystery of this heart which beats  
So wild, so deep in us — to know  
Whence our lives come and where they go.  
—Matthew Arnold, "The Buried Life"

A man said to the universe:  
"Sir, I exist."  
"However," replied the universe,  
**"The fact has not created in me  
A sense of obligation."**  
—Stephen Crane, from *War is Kind and Other Lines* (1899)

O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth,  
Who has displayed Your splendor above the heavens!  
From the mouth of infants and nursing babes  
You have established strength,  
Because of Your adversaries,  
To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;  
**What is man, that You take thought of him?  
And the son of man, that You care for him?**  
Yet You have made him a little lower than God,  
And crown him with glory and majesty!  
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;

You have put all things under his feet,  
All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,  
The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,  
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!  
— King David, Psalm 8

### Definitions of “Worldview”

- ◆ *A deeply influential vision or perception of God, the universe, our world, and ourselves that is rooted and grounded in the embodied human heart.*  
— David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*

### Importance of “Worldview”

#### *Personally*

- ◆ But there are some people, nevertheless — and I am one of them — who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. ... We think the question is not whether [one’s] theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether, in the long run, anything else affects them.” — G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics*

#### *Culturally*

- ◆ To think intelligently today is to think worldwisely, to come to grips with the mosaic of meaning systems which makes up modern thinking. — Os Guinness

#### *Major Worldviews:*

- ◆ Theism & Deism
- ◆ Naturalism (atheism, humanism, secularism, materialism)
  - a. Nihilism
  - b. Existentialism
- ◆ Pantheism
  - a. New Age Consciousness
  - b. Panentheism
- ◆ Polytheism
- ◆ Modernism
- ◆ Postmodernism
- ◆ Sanctity of life (abortion, euthanasia, cloning, embryonic stem cell research, etc.)
- ◆ Religious liberty
- ◆ Human rights
- ◆ Sexuality and marriage (pre-marital, extra-marital, pornography, AIDS, same sex marriage, etc)
- ◆ War/Terrorism
- ◆ Politics/Judiciary roles
- ◆ Faith-based social solutions
- ◆ Social justice and the marginalized (poor, prisoners, elderly, disabled)
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Media (sex/violence in TV, music, film)
- ◆ Environment

#### *Major Issues:*

### Christian Worldview — The State of the Church on Worldview

Worldview thinking: George Barna, *Think Like Jesus*, p. 23.

- ◆ 9% of Christian adults have a biblical worldview, 91% don’t.
- ◆ 2% of Christian teenagers have a biblical worldview, 98% don’t.

Three unrecognized problems:

- ◆ Bits and pieces
- ◆ Disconnection between Old and New Testaments
- ◆ Religious compartmentalization or dualism

#### Five big questions

- ◆ Where am I? Location
- ◆ Who am I? Identity
- ◆ Why am I? Purpose
- ◆ What's gone wrong? Brokenness
- ◆ What's the remedy? Salvation/Hope

#### A Christian/Biblical Worldview

- ◆ Creation (Genesis 1-2) — Where am I? Who am I? Why am I?
- ◆ Fall (Genesis 3) — What's gone wrong?
- ◆ Redemption/Consummation (Genesis 3: 15 – Revelation 22: 21) — What's the remedy?

#### **Musical Reflection: “My World View”--Audio Adrenaline**

1. I want to see the world through Jesus' eyes; See through Jesus tears, I want to see the world through Jesus' eyes, My vision's not as clear, I want to feel the world with the hands that made it; Know the pain and appreciate it, Hear their cries and hope to understand.

#### CHORUS I

My world view  
 It's how I see the world  
 It's how I look at you  
 My world view  
 It's how I see the world  
 Would you like to see it to?  
 My world view

2. I want to place my foot upon the rock  
 The rock that doesn't move  
 For upon the rock the Kingdom's built  
 And here's the Kingdom view  
 I see creation and I see Adam's fall  
 I see through the years and I can see it all  
 All things come together for the good

#### CHORUS II

My world view  
 It's how I see the world  
 It's how I look at you  
 My world view  
 It's how I see the world  
 Would you like to see it to?  
 My world view  
 It's how I see the world  
 Would you like to see it to?  
 My world view  
 Coming into view, coming into view,  
 coming into to full view

#### CHORUS III

My world view  
 I can see, I see it forever  
 It's how I see the world  
 It's how I look at you  
 My world view  
 Coming into view coming into full view  
 It's how I see the world  
 Would you like to see it too?

#### **Three Questions and a Conclusion:**

1. Worldview as a concept: Are you familiar with the concept of worldview, its definition as well as its personal and cultural importance?

2. Worldview alternatives: Are you aware of the various worldviews that are prominent today and the influence they have in shaping individual lives and the contours of our culture?

3. Your worldview: What is your essential view of life, your most fundamental assumptions about the world and your place in it? Do you have a Christian or biblical worldview and are you aware of its basic content and implications?

**Conclusion:** The central importance of biblical worldview development for Christians and the Church

**Application:** Docility toward God and His Word  
Love of God and neighbor

The Big Picture:  
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**Creation**

**Two Hymns:**

*This is my Father's World*  
— Maltbie B. Babcock

*This World is not my Home,  
I'm Just-a-Passin' Through*  
— Christian spiritual

**Introduction:** The Big Picture of a Christian/Biblical Worldview:

- ◆ Creation: — where, who, why am I? Formation of all things, Normal, Shalom, Good News!

**I. Creation (Genesis 1-2)**

A. Creation as the starting point

1. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."  
— Apostles' Creed

2. "Christianity as a [worldview] system does not begin with Christ as Savior, but with the infinite-personal God who created the world in the beginning and who made man significant in the flow of history."  
— Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, p. 97.

B. The big question: where am I?

"He who does not know what the world is does not know where he is. And he who does not know for what purpose the world exists, does not know who he is, nor what the world is." — Marcus Aurelius

C. Genesis 1

1. Introduction (vv. 1-2)

2. The six days of creation (vv. 3-31)

- The first three days of creation: forming
- The second three days of creation: filling

Formed

Filled

**Day 1** Light

**Day 4** Luminaries (sun, moon, stars)

**Day 2** Water and sky

**Day 5** Fish and birds

**Day 3** Land and vegetation

**Day 6** Beasts and human beings

3. Summary and conclusion: VERY GOOD! (v. 31)

#### D. Chapter Two:

1. The seventh/sabbath day (vv. 1-3)
2. The creation of the man and the planting of the garden (vv. 4-9)
3. The garden and the covenant prohibition (vv.10-17)
4. The creation of woman and the institution of marriage (vv. 18-25)

#### E. Poetic and theological reflections on creation

1. Poetic: Psalm 8, 19, 104; Isa. 6: 3
2. Theological — Christ the Creator (John 1: 1-5; Colossians 1: 15-23; Hebrews 1: 1-3)

#### F. Three important insights and a conclusion

1. The goodness of creation

And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (Gen. 1: 31).

“Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude: for it is sanctified by the means of the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4: 4-5).

2. A Sacramental and Eucharistic perspective on the world (seeing God in all things as His gift and giving thanks — Psalm 8: 1, 9; Psalm 19: 1; Isa. 6: 3)

“The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”

— G. M. Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”

“All that exists is God’s gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man’s life communion with God. It [the world] is divine love made food, made life for man. God blesses everything He creates, and, in biblical language, this means that He makes all creation the sign and means of His presence and wisdom, love and revelation: ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good.’”

— Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 14

3. God the Creator is worthy of worship (Rev. 4: 11)

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You did create all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created.”

4. Conclusion: Make the wonderful rediscovery of the world as God’s very good creation!

## II. Creation Decree (Genesis 1: 26-28)

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

### A. Who am I? *Imago Dei*

The bodiless, invisible God reflects and expresses Himself in the created world by the uniting of body and mind/soul/spirit in whole human persons as male and female, God's symbols and images on the earth.

### B. Why am I? Why have I been created?

1. Spiritual purpose: a personal relationship of worship, love, respect/fear, trust, and service with God whose image and likeness we are!
  - ◆ "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment" (Matthew 22: 37-38).
  - ◆ "O Lord, You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." St. Augustine, *Confessions*
2. Social purpose: Human beings as the image and likeness of a triune — three-in-one, one-in-three — God are fundamentally social creatures who seek satisfaction of the deep need for companionship in authentic relationships with other people, especially as male and female in the context of marriage and family as ordained by God in Genesis 1-2.
  - ◆ "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2: 18).
  - ◆ "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22: 39).
3. Cultural purpose: Human beings have been made as God's image and likeness in order that they might have dominion over the earth, rule and subdue it, and be the creators and makers of culture and civilization for human benefit to God's glory. Whether it be land, sea or air, fish, bird or beast, men and women together are, as caretakers or stewards, to fill and form the earth, to creatively develop, unfold and open up all of the possibilities hidden in the womb of creation, both natural and human.
  - ◆ "Down to the present day, all the instructing of children, every kind of school, every script, every book, all our technology, research, science and teaching, with their methods and instruments and institutions, are nothing other than the fulfillment of this command [to have dominion over the earth]. The whole of history, all human endeavor, comes under this sign, this biblical phrase."  
— Ludwig Kohler, *Der Hebraische Mensch*, p. 112, quoted in H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, p. 164.



◆ "How then can he be said to resemble God... The characteristic common to God and man is apparently that: *the desire and the ability to make things.*" — Dorothy Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*, p. 22.

4. Sabbatical purpose: Because God completed His creative work in six days and rested on the seventh, He sanctified that day, commanded us to do the same, showing that our final goal in life is rest in Him.

The goal of creation, and at the same time the beginning of all that follows, is the event of God's Sabbath freedom, Sabbath rest and Sabbath joy, in which man, too, has been summoned to participate.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III, 1, p. 98.

5. Overall doxological purpose: the glory of God!

"The glory of God is a person fully alive!" — St. Irenaeus

"The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."  
— Westminster Shorter Catechism

### Three Insights and a Conclusion

1. *The human project*: our location, identity, and purposes are all spelled out in Genesis 1-2. These chapters tell us what God intended the world and human life to be, informing us of where we are (God's very good world), who we are (*imago Dei*), and why we have been created (spiritual, social, cultural, sabbatical, doxological purposes).
2. *Life's biggest choices*: our purpose, partner, profession, our master, mate, mission are all rooted in the creation decree of Genesis 1: 26-28.
3. *Shalom*: God created the universe, our world, and ourselves out of His extravagant love and for the purpose of blessing. He intended us to flourish in the whole of life, to experience soundness, wholeness, well-being and beatitude, that is, *shalom*!
4. *Conclusion*: "Why should one become a Christian? In order to become fully human!" — Hans Kung

"I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly"  
(John 10: 10b).

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**The Fall**

**Introduction:** The Big Picture of a Christian/Biblical Worldview:

- ◆ Creation: where, who, why are we? Formation of all things, Shalom, Normal, Good News!
- ◆ Fall: what's gone wrong? Deformation of all things, Vandalism of Shalom, Abnormal, Bad News!

**I. The Fall (Genesis 3)**

A. The story of the fall (vv. 1-7)

"Centuries of religious art and, in recent years, hundreds of cartoons of naked women, apples and snakes have served to distract us from the meaning of the fall in Genesis 3." — Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, p. 39.

1. The temptation (vv. 1-5)

- a. The serpent's question (v. 1)
- b. The woman's answer (vv. 2-3)
- c. The serpent's response: two lies (vv. 4-5)
  - 1.) You shall not die (v. 4)
  - 2.) You will be like God (v. 5)

2. The act of disobedience and the awareness of nakedness (vv. 6-7)

B. The consequences of the covenantal disobedience: death/curse (vv. 8-24)

- ◆ Humpty Dumpty
- ◆ Pascal's "*misere*" of humanity in contrast to our original grandeur.
- ◆ "Man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree brought death into the world and all our woe!" — John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

1. The *theological/spiritual* separation/alienation of humanity from God (vv. 8-9)

"The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

2. The *psychological* separation/alienation of human beings from themselves (v. 10)

“I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself” (fear, shame, guilt).

3. The *sociological* separation of man from woman (v. 12)

“The woman, whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate.”

4. Curse on the serpent (vv. 14-15)

- ◆ Role: as an animal
- ◆ Relationship: woman and her offspring

5. Curse on the woman (v. 16)

- ◆ Role: as mother
- ◆ Relationship: to man/husband

6. Curse on the man and creation and the sentence of death (vv. 17-19)

- ◆ Role: as ruler
- ◆ Relationship: to the earth

7. The *geographical* separation of humanity from the Garden of Eden (vv. 22-24)

“So He drove the man out.”

#### C. The biblical/theological meaning of the fall:

1. Autonomy: This decision of Adam and Eve was to be autonomous, independent of God and self-legislating. Humanity died, the creation is cursed and the world became a cosmic cemetery, and now as Ecclesiastes says, “all is vanity and striving after wind.”

2. Non-sacramental and Non-eucharistic: “Man has loved the world, but as an end in itself and not as transparent to God. He has done it so consistently that it has become something that is ‘in the air.’ It seems nature for man to experience the world as opaque, and not shot through with the presence of God. It seems natural not to live a life of thanksgiving for God’s gift of a world. It seems natural not to be eucharistic.” — Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p. 16.

#### D. Extended consequences of the fall (Gen. 4-11)

1. Violence (Genesis 4: 8)

- ◆ Fratricide: “Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”

2. Humanistic cultures/civilizations

- a. Cain/Lamech civilization (Genesis 4: 16-24)
- b. Pre-flood civilization (Genesis 6: 1-7, 11-12)
- c. The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 1-9)

3. Pride (Genesis 4:23-24; 11: 4)
4. Idolatry and corruption (Genesis 4: 16; 6: 11-12)
5. Sexual perversion (Genesis 4: 19; 6: 2; 9: 20-25)
6. Division (Genesis 10: 1-32)
7. Insecurity (Genesis 4: 14; 11: 4)

## II. The consequences of the Fall in the New Testament (Romans 1: 18-32)

- A. Truth about God through creation suppressed (vv. 19-20)
- B. Theological consequence: Wrath revealed (v. 18)
- C. Epistemic/knowledge consequence: Ignorance (v. 21)
  - ◆ Futility of speculations
  - ◆ Darkness of heart
  - ◆ Deception in false wisdom, actual foolishness
- D. Religious/Spiritual consequence: Idolatry (vv. 22-23)
  - ◆ Worship of humanity
  - ◆ Worship of animals

Hence arises that boundless, filthy mire of error wherewith the whole earth was filled and covered. For each man's mind is like a labyrinth, so that it is no wonder that individual nations were drawn aside into various falsehoods; and not only this—but individual men, almost, had their own gods. For as rashness and superficiality are joined to ignorance and darkness, scarcely a single person has ever been found who did not fashion for himself an idol or spector in place of God. *Surely, just as waters boil up from a vast copious spring, so does an immense crowd of gods flow forth from the human mind*, while each one, in wandering about with too much license, wrongly invest this or that about God himself. —John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, V. 12.

- E. Ethical consequences: Immorality (vv. 24-28)
  - ◆ Impurity (vv. 24-25)
  - ◆ Degrading passions (vv. 26-27)
  - ◆ Depraved mind (vv. 28-32)

### Three Insights and Conclusion:

1. *Structure and direction*: we must distinguish between the *structure* of God's very good creation and the sin that *misdirects and perverts* it all. The problem is not ontology, but bad ethics, not metaphysics but immorality. There is a difference between the barn and the rats, and it is the latter (rats) rather than the former (barn) that must be eliminated. Creation is still good, and is not to be rejected because it is infected, as the Gnostics do. Rather, what it needs is a return to good health (Shalom).

2. *The fallen human condition:* sin has thwarted our essential purposes and has disfigured the creation and our humanity — spiritually with our rank idolatry, socially with our radical self-centeredness, culturally with our abusive power, sabbatically with our restless anxiety, doxologically with our overweening pride.

3. *The impossibility of self-salvation:* Despite our heroic efforts to redeem ourselves, the gods of sex, money, power and so on in whom we have trusted have been impotent to save. They only culminate in frustration and judgment. All the kings' horses and men have not be able to put Humpty Dumpty back together again!

*Conclusion:* The entire human race and the whole world cry out for the coming of the kingdom of God!

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**Redemption**

**Introduction:** The Big Picture of a Christian/Biblical Worldview:

- ◆ Creation: Where, who, why are we? Formation of all things, Shalom, Normal, Good News!
- ◆ Fall: What's gone wrong? Deformation of all things, Vandalism of Shalom, Abnormal, Bad News! Uncreation.
- ◆ Redemption: What's the remedy? Reformation of all things, Restoration of Shalom, Normal again, Good News! New Creation.
- ◆ The Bible as the story/history of redemption (*Heilsgeschichte*)

What is the Bible? It is the grand story of God salvaging a sin-wrecked creation with a three chapter preface or introduction: two chapters on creation (Gen. 1-2), one on the fall (Gen. 3), the rest on redemption (Genesis — Revelation)!

<u>WV/Theology:</u>	<u>Creation</u>	<u>Fall-Uncreation</u>	<u>Redemption-NC1<sup>st</sup> Coming</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Coming</u>	
Scripture:	Genesis 1-2	Genesis 3	OT Promise	NT Fulfillment	Consummation
People:	Adam/Eve	A/E	Abraham/Israel	Jesus/Church	NHNE
God:	Wisdom & Power	Justice & Holiness	Love/Mercy/Grace		

**I. Redemption Promised in the Old Testament (Genesis 3: 15 — Malachi 4: 6)**

A. Hints of redemption in Genesis 3

1. "Take . . . eat" (Genesis 3: 6; cf. Matt. 26: 26)
2. "Thorns and thistles" (Genesis 3: 18; Mark 15: 17)
3. "By the sweat of your brow" (Genesis 3: 19 Luke 22: 44)
4. "Eve" (Life, Living; Genesis 3: 20; Luke 1: 38)
5. "Coats of skin" (Genesis 3: 21; Galatians 3: 27)
6. "Gardens" (Genesis 2: 8-17; 3: 22-24 — Eden and the Garden Tomb, John 19: 41)

B. The *protevangelium* or first glimmer of the gospel (Genesis 3: 15)

"And I will put enmity between you [serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring [the serpent's] and her offspring [the woman's]; He [the woman's offspring] shall bruise you [the serpent] on the head, And you [the serpent] shall bruise him [the woman's offspring] on the heel."

### C. Old Testament *Promise* of Redemption

1. Redemption covenant (Gen. 3: 15): offspring of the woman
2. Noahic covenant (Gen. 9): race of Shem
3. Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12, 15, 17): line of Abraham
4. Israeli/Sinai covenant (Exod. 19): nation of Israel and tribe of Judah
5. Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7; Psalm 89): family of David
6. New covenant (Jer. 31; Ezek. 33): Person of Jesus

## II. Redemption Fulfilled in the New Testament “Already”

A. Genealogy (Matt. 1; Luke 3): Adam/Eve, Abel, Seth, Noah, Shem, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Mary/Joseph, Jesus/Kingdom/Church!

### B. Jesus Christ

1. The God-Man — Fully Son of God and fully Son of Man

“Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhood and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance (homoousios) with the Father as regards His Godhood, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards His manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin.”

— Chalcedonian Creed, A. D. 451

2. Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of Adam (Matt. 1: 1; Luke 3: 38)
3. Christ/Messiah (Matt. 16: 16; John 4: 25-26), Lord/YHWH (Luke 2: 10-11; John 8: 58), Savior (Matt. 1: 21; Luke 2: 11; John 4: 42; Acts 4: 12; 1 Tim. 1: 15), Lamb of God (John 1: 29).

### C. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

1. Kingdom definition: the rule, reign, sovereignty, dominion, empire, and authority of God present in Christ exercised redemptively against all the evil in the world.

- ◆ Diseases cured
- ◆ Demons exorcised
- ◆ Falsehood corrected
- ◆ Storms stilled
- ◆ Hunger/thirst satisfied
- ◆ Tyranny opposed
- ◆ Injustice denounced
- ◆ Legalism exposed
- ◆ Sins forgiven
- ◆ Satan judged
- ◆ Death defeated
- ◆ Marginalized accepted

2. Kingdom timing: fulfilled and present in Christ: inaugurated or realized eschatology
  - ◆ "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then *the kingdom of God has come upon you*. — Matthew 12: 28
  - ◆ "Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand*; repent and believe in the gospel." — Mark 1: 14-15
  - ◆ "Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, *the kingdom of God is in your midst*." — Luke 17: 20-21
  - ◆ "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again *he cannot see the kingdom of God*.'" — John 3: 3
3. Kingdom mystery: the unexpected presence of the kingdom of God in a spiritual form through service and sacrifice
  - a. The mystery kingdom in parables of (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8)
    - ◆ The sowing of seed and the four soils: how preaching spreads the kingdom.
    - ◆ The wheat and the tares: why the wicked tares remain.
    - ◆ The mustard seed and the leaven: how the kingdom came humbly and silently in secret.
    - ◆ The hidden treasure and the costly pearl: what the kingdom is worth, namely everything!
  - b. The mystery kingdom in Jesus' cross, resurrection, and ascension
    - ◆ Jesus atoned for sin, judged Satan, defeated death, and was enthroned as ruler of the cosmos at the right hand of God.
    - ◆ *Christus Victor!*

John Updike, *Seven Stanzas at Easter*

Make no mistake: if He rose at all  
It was as His body;  
IF the cells' dissolution did not reverse,  
The molecules reknit, the amino acids  
rekindle, the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,  
Each soft spring recurrent;  
It was not as His Spirit in the mouths and  
fuddled eyes of the eleven apostles;  
It was as His flesh; ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,  
The same valved heart  
That — pierced — died, withered, paused,  
and then regathered  
Out of enduring might new strength to  
enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,  
Analogy, sidestepping, transcendence,  
Making of the event a parable, a sign  
painted in the faded credulity of earlier ages:  
Let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché



Not a stone in a quarry but the vast rock of  
materiality that in the slow grinding of time  
Will eclipse for each of us the wide light of  
day.

4. Kingdom call: repent and believe in the gospel of the kingdom! Follow Me!

Matt. 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. Matt. 16:25 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. Matt. 16:26 "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Eph. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; Eph. 2:9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

C. Church/Body of Christ

1. The church is not the kingdom; rather the kingdom creates the church (the kingdom as God's redeeming rule is the cause, and the church as the body of believers in Christ is the effect)
2. The kingdom created church as the community of redemption and new creation
  - a. Redemption and renewal of believers in their spiritual (God), social (others), cultural (world), sabbatical (peace/rest), and doxological (worship) purposes
  - b. Redemption and renewal of the worship of God through Word and Sacrament (one, holy, catholic, apostolic church)
3. The church — corporately and individually, gathered and scattered — is the witness to the kingdom as God's redeeming rule in all of culture and the whole of creation in evangelism, mission, vocation

**III. Redemption Consummated/Completed in the New Testament "Not Yet"**

- A. Essential thesis: God's kingdom redemption is both present and future, already and not yet

Our central thesis is that the Kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish His rule among men, and that this Kingdom which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign. The Kingdom of God involves two great moments: fulfillment within history [already], and consummation at the end of history [not yet].

— George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 91.

- B. What will happen in the future? The Nicene Creed

1. Christ's return and judgment: "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end" (Matt. 25: 31-46).
2. Resurrection of the dead: "We look for the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15: 50-58; Phil. 3: 20-21)

3. New heavens and new earth: “We look for ... the life of the world to come.”  
(Romans 8: 18-25; Rev. 21: 1-8)

### Three Insights and a Conclusion:

1. Christ’s redemption means the salvation of the whole creation! God’s grace in Jesus restores nature! Redemption is new creation, literally. God doesn’t just save the soul and then dump the earth and the body. Rather, all things are being redeemed! Salvation is cosmic in scope!
  - ◆ The original very good creation (and God’s purposes for humanity and the earth).
  - ◆ The perversion of that very good creation through human sin.
  - ◆ The restoration/renewal of that creation through the redemption in Jesus Christ and the restoration of God’s original purposes for believers in the church for the world.
2. Christ’s redemption means the renewal of our original purposes as human beings: (1) to fellowship with and love for God *spiritually*; (2) to relationships of love with others *socially*; (3) to having dominion and fulfilling our vocational tasks *culturally*; (4) to rest and peace in God *sabbatically*; (5) to giving God honor and glory in all things *doxologically*! This means the renewal of our total humanity in Christ and under God! Christianity is the true humanism!
3. Christ’s redemption means the formation of a distinctively Christian/biblical worldview and way of life! It is our vision of God, the universe, our world and ourselves that is rooted and grounded in the embodied human heart! It is our biblically based “kardiopic.” It is the most important and practical thing about us. It is basis for our perspectives on all things and for our a way of life — our character and our conduct — in the world.

*Conclusion:* Worship, love, serve, work, witness, rest. May God grant us docility toward Himself and His Word. *Soli Deo Gloria*