

Chapter Four: Redemption

Introduction:

1. The redemption achieved by Jesus Christ is cosmic in scope; it restores the whole creation; grace restores nature, including humanity, of course.

Col. 1:15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created, {both} in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. Col. 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. Col. 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. Col. 1:19 For it was the {Father's} good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, Col. 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, {I say}, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

2. Hence redemption means restoration and renewal of an originally good creation; salvation and redemption, therefore, is not:

Non-creational-negligent or forgetful of creation

Supra-creation-layered on top of creation and splitting life into two parts

Anti-creational-against or opposed to creation as the Gnostics were

Rather, salvation is New creational or Re-creational, that is, it brings the entire creation within its scope, and all things are subject to redemption.

3. Hence, salvation as new creation affects the whole of creation life, including, but not limited to the spiritual or religious life. This would include education, vocation, marriage, family, sport and play, arts, etc. When all areas of human life are in the process of redemption, all of life is evangelistic and an act of worship.

Salvation as Restoration:

4. Salvation as restoration is the return to and renewal of the good creation and God's purposes for it. All the basic words in the NT begin with an RE prefix:

Redemption: to buy back from slavery or bondage by the payment of a price

Reconciliation: restoration of an originally good friendship from alienation

Renewal: to make new again (Grk: ana...)

Rom. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Regeneration: new birth and to pass from spiritual death to spiritual life

Recreation/new creation: God doesn't make a new world, but hangs on to the one He originally made and salvages it. God didn't make junk, and He doesn't junk what He made!

5. Salvation does not make anything new, and is not an addition to the natural, esp. of the supernatural, but is more of a "subtraction":

Salvation is not the addition of something spiritual to the physical, or supernatural to the natural, or something valuable to creaturely life that it was previously lacking, that is, a *donum super additum*.

Rather, salvation is a subtraction of sin, death, and dominion to satan; the subtraction leads to restoration of a vitality and purpose that was already there, but debilitated by sin.

6. Hence, the reformational distinctive is the radical, cosmic extent of creation, the fall, and redemption.

7. The role of the human race in the fall and in redemption. The fall of one man, Adam, was the ruin of the whole creation; the atoning death of Christ results in the salvation of the whole world and the participation of the human race in the benefits of salvation has cosmic implications as well:

Fallen humanity in disobedience perverts and disorders the whole creation.

Redeemed humanity in obedience restores and reorders the whole world.

"The adamic race perverts the cosmos; the Christian human race renews it."

Hence, there must be the promotion of renewal in every department of creation, wherever our callings take us. The goal is restoration, not repristination, the restoration of culture and society at its present stage of development.

The Kingdom of God

8. Salvation as restoration is achieved through the inbreaking of the kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

- The kingdom of God is the kingship, reign, rule, sovereign dominion of God.
- The dynamic meaning is to be emphasized: the activity of reigning and ruling.
- The secondary meaning of the term is the static one: realm, sphere, territory.
- The Kingdom of God is central to the whole of the NT.
- In Christ we have the effective demonstration of the kingship of God directed at all the evil in the world.

Jesus' Ministry

9. Jesus' life and ministry is proof positive of the coming and presence of the kingdom of God, especially seen in His kingdom words and kingdom deeds.

Matt. 12:28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Matt. 12:29 "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong {man}? And then he will plunder his house.

10. The miracles of Jesus, miracles of restoration, healing, life, freedom, etc. is a freeing the creation from sin and evil and the restoration of life and creation purposes.

11. The kingdom of God is "already" but "not yet." Present and future, associated with the first and second comings of Jesus.

Comparison with other views of the kingdom:

12. Most other views of the kingdom of God reduce it or limit it to distinctively spiritual areas of existence: to the soul, church, future, or morality. The kingship of Christ is limited to certain areas of life, and not the whole.

a. Pietism: kingdom of God is personal piety, and related to the soul and church.

b. RCC and Protestant views: Kingdom of God is the church; hence, the clergy are the only ones in full time christian service.

c. Dispensational: kingdom is for the Jews and is still in the future, to be realized in the millennial kingdom.

d. Liberal protestant view: kingdom is the moral sphere of service and justice for suffering and oppressed people.

