

# THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW: CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION

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## INTRODUCTION

The Biblical Worldview of Creation/Fall/Redemption in Genesis 1-3 is foundational for all of life.

Foundation is necessary to go on to maturity, fruitfulness, unity of the faith, and fullness of the knowledge of God (Ephesians 4; Hebrews 6).

Foundation is laid in one's life at every level of learning: grammar, dialectic and rhetoric; at the levels of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. It must be factually remembered, in order; it must be rationally justified, at every step; and it must be applied, with social virtuosity.

## ON CREATION

### 1. Creation is revelation: necessarily, intentionally and exclusively.

- i. Necessarily: A being is revealed in its acts; the acts of God in creation and providence reveal the nature of God.
- ii. Intentionally: Creation is good; it was what God intended; God created to reveal himself and rules to reveal himself.
- iii. Exclusively: There is no knowledge of God without revelation; there is no revelation apart from the works of creation and providence.

### 2. This revelation is full and clear.

This revelation is full.

- i. The whole earth is full of his glory (Isaiah 6:3). The length, breadth, depth and height of God's glory is seen in his filling everything in every way.
- ii. The vast array of the creation, each after its kind, and the multitudes of human beings in history are a full revelation of God's glory.
- iii. Providence of the Fall and of Redemption are a full revelation of God's justice and mercy; nothing more is added to what is full.

This revelation is clear.

- iv. The eternal power and divine nature are clearly revealed in the things which are made; the law of God is written on the hearts of all men (Romans 1:20, 2:14-15).
- v. The clarity of general revelation makes the unbelief of mankind without excuse.
- vi. Clarity is opposed to all forms of skepticism (no knowledge is possible) and to fideism (belief without proof/understanding).

### 3. Eternal life is knowing God.

- i. From general revelation: the good for man as a rational being is understanding creation and providence which reveal God; the good is the knowledge of God.
- ii. From special revelation: eternal life is knowing God (John 17:3); it begins in this life and grows unendingly in the next life.
- iii. From Historic Christianity: man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever; to glorify God is to know his glory and to make his glory known.

#### **4. The knowledge of God is through the work of dominion.**

- i. The knowledge of God is through knowledge of God's self-revelation in the creation unfolding in providence/history.
- ii. The knowledge of the creation is through the work of dominion. In dominion man is to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and rule over it (Genesis 1).  
The work of dominion is corporate, cumulative and communal. It requires all of mankind, working together through all of history to be achieved.  
Dominion requires naming (grasping the nature of) all beings in all their parts and relations, and developing this nature/essence, the excellence/glory in all beings, so as to make known the glory of God. The outcome of the work of dominion is the City of God (Revelation 21).
- iii. The work of dominion under the fall and redemption requires making disciples of all nations and taking every thought captive which is raised up against the knowledge of God (Matthew 28:20; 2 Corinthians 10:4).

#### **5. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.**

- i. Man is the image of God; as God's work of creation and providence is revelation, so man's work of dominion brings knowledge of God as creator and ruler.
- ii. As God completed the work of creation, man will complete the work of dominion.  
The Sabbath day of rest is instituted by God to remind man of his origin and his destiny in eschatological hope.
- iii. The work of dominion will be completed when the earth is filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9).

## ON THE FALL

### 1. The Covenant of Creation

- i. Purpose of the covenant: to establish mankind in a permanent (positive) relationship with God.
- ii. Representation: all of life and history is centered in the Garden of Eden; the act of one man, Adam, will affect all.
- iii. Probation: Adam is to be tested concerning his pursuit of God's purpose for mankind: the knowledge of God through the work of dominion.
- iv. Manifestation: the inward, invisible choice of good and evil is manifested in the outward act of obedience regarding eating from the two trees.
- v. The visible covenant of marriage between man and woman reveals the invisible covenant of creation between God and man.

### 2. Temptation

- i. The temptation is a test of one's faith/understanding of good and evil (both objectively and subjectively).
- ii. Neither the tempter nor the test is the cause of sin but rather the outward occasion that reveals sin.
- iii. The test comes in the form of an argument addressed to the understanding: a reason (premise): "for you shall be as God knowing good and evil," is given to support the conclusion: "you shall not surely die."
- iv. Eve was deceived: she justified her act on the basis of seeking wisdom apart from any reference to God.
- v. Adam had turned back: he had ceased to seek the knowledge of God as the good for himself and for his wife. He failed to keep in mind the clear difference between God the creator and man the creature with respect to knowing good and evil. He determined good autonomously by what pleased him.

### 3. Sin

- i. From general revelation: sin is an act contrary to one's nature as a rational being, made in the image of God; it is to neglect, avoid, resist and deny reason in the face of what is clear about God.
- ii. From special revelation: sin is not seeking, not understanding, and not doing what is right (Romans 3:10-11); the root sin of not seeking and understanding leads to the fruit sin of not doing.
- iii. Sin is unbelief as lacking understanding, which leads to the outward act of disobedience; because of the clarity of general revelation unbelief is inexcusable.
- iv. Sin is disobedience; the outward act of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil reveals the inward reality of determining good and evil for oneself.
- v. Sin, in its essence, is autonomy: (i) it is putting one's self in the place of God to determine good and evil; (ii) it is doing what is right in one's own eyes; (iii) it is doing whatever pleases oneself; (iv) it is being a law unto oneself; (v) it is lawlessness—not being subject to the law of God in any area of life, beginning with the first form of the word of God to man as the laws of reason.

### 4. Death

- i. There are two kinds of death—physical death and spiritual death (John 5:25, 28; 11:25; Ephesians 2:1). The wages of sin is spiritual death, not physical death. "In the day you eat you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).
- ii. Spiritual death is present and inherent in sin, not future and imposed; it is not hell conceived of as a literal, physical lake of fire.
- iii. The inherent consequence of moral evil is self-destruction of the soul; it is meaninglessness, boredom and guilt increasing without end; it is spiritual death.
- iv. Spiritual death is spoken of as darkness (of mind), burning (of desire without satisfaction), torment (of conscience), as a bottomless pit, and as the second death. The lake of fire is (symbolically) the second death (Revelation 20:5, 14; 21:8).
- v. Physical death is imposed by God as a call back from spiritual death.

## 5. Theodicy

- i. Moral evil as unbelief serves subjectively to obscure and objectively to deepen the revelation of God (particularly the divine justice and mercy).
- ii. If moral evil is removed abruptly then the revelation will not be deepened; and if moral evil is not removed then the revelation will not be seen.  
Therefore moral evil is removed gradually.
- iii. Moral evil as unbelief is allowed to work itself out in world history in every form and degree of admixture with belief.  
In the spiritual war between belief and unbelief, which is age long and agonizing, good will overcome evil.
- iv. Natural evil (as toil, strife, old age, sickness, death and war, famine and plague) is imposed by God to restrain, recall from and remove moral evil; it is a call to stop and think; physical death is a call back from spiritual death.
- v. Physical death as a call back is mercy; it requires special revelation as redemptive revelation to show how God is both just and merciful at the same time.

## ON REDEMPTION

### 1. First call back: shame; Response: self-deception

- i. The outward effect of sin: their eyes were opened and they realized their nakedness.
- ii. The inward effect of sin: in one's thoughts, feeling shame from one's own conscience is the first call back to repentance from sin.
- iii. In the body/soul unity, the visible reveals the invisible; under sin, physical nakedness is a reminder of spiritual nakedness.
- iv. Outward response to the shame of nakedness: shame is avoided by making a covering of leaves, yet the covering is still seen and still reminds.
- v. Inward response: by self-deception a person avoids acknowledging the sin of not seeking and not understanding what is clear about God.

### 2. Second call back: call to self-examination; Response: self-justification

- i. The second call back by word goes beyond the first: it is outer and from another vs. inward and from within oneself.
- ii. The second call back comes by word, from God, as a question: "Where are you?"
- iii. The question, coming from God who is all-knowing, is a call for Adam's self-examination, not a call for his self-disclosure.
- iv. From hiding in guilt and fear, man is called to confession of sin: "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you . . . ?"
- v. Man's response: man justifies himself by blaming both the woman and God: "The woman whom you gave to be with me . . ."

### 3. Third call back: the promise and the curse

- i. The promise consists in establishing a spiritual war between belief and unbelief, which will be age-long and agonizing, in which good will overcome evil; the seed of the woman, in the place of Adam, will do what Adam failed to do.
- ii. The curse in the third call back is in deed, beyond word: it is imposed by God on all mankind throughout history through Adam's representation.
- iii. The curse consists of toil and strife, and old age, sickness and death; at times the curse is intensified corporately to war, famine and plague.
- iv. The curse is not punishment but mercy; it is the final, continuing call back from sin and self-deception and self-justification.
- v. The suffering of natural evil, imposed through the curse, serves to restrain, to recall from and to remove moral evil; it is a call to stop and think.

### 4. Justification: God's response to man's response: repentance and faith

- i. Adam accepts life for mankind under the curse, with hope in the promise of redemption.
- ii. Adam calls his wife's name Eve, the mother of all the living; he chooses to obey in repentance, with faith in the promise.
- iii. God clothes Adam and Eve with garments of skin: vicarious atonement through the sacrifice of another in the place of Adam, will undo what Adam did.
- iv. Under the covenant there is triple imputation: Adam's guilt is imputed to all whom he represents; the guilt of all who accept the promise is imputed to the one promised in the place of Adam; the righteousness of the one sacrificed is imputed to all who believe.
- v. Wearing the garments of skin vs. the covering of leaves is a continual reminder of God's justification (the forgiveness of sin and provision of righteousness) through the one who is to come in the place of Adam.

## 5. Sanctification through the truth

- i. Sanctification is the cleansing from sin; it assumes one has received God's forgiveness of sin and his justification.
- ii. Sanctification is by knowledge of the truth (John 17:17); this knowledge comes through suffering under the curse; natural evil serves variously to restrain, to recall from and to remove moral evil in every form.
- iii. Man is driven from the Garden of Eden, to live under the curse, to be cleansed from sin and self-deception and self-justification.
- iv. The call back through the curse cannot be avoided; the way to the tree of life is guarded; all born of Adam must die physically.
- v. Sanctification for those who are justified continues until death; it is incomplete until death and ends with death.