

Developing a Christian Worldview: The Basis

FOCUS

Fellowship of Christian University Students

CREATION

Doctrine



Approaching Genesis

- ▶ Origin: Not human but divine
- ▶ Treatment: Not exhaustive but selective
- ▶ Character: Not Scientific or Historical
But Religious & Literary
- ▶ Note: Gen 1:1 - 2:3 – Theocentric
Gen 2:4 - 25 – Anthropocentric
Gen 1 & 2 - Geocentric

A process view (Gen 1)

- ▶ In the beginning God...
 - 34 times in 34 verses
 - Trinitarian references: Spirit, Word; "let us" (1:26)
- ▶ In the end Man
 - in Image of God; to Rule over creation
- ▶ In the process, "bara"
 - *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) creation
 - Matter (vs.1); Life (vs.21); Man (vs.27 – 3 times)

Discovering the (literary) pattern

Day 1 – Light	Day 4 – The heavenly bodies
Day 2 – Water & Sky	Day 5 – Fish & Birds
Day 3 – Dry Land	Day 6 – Land animals (including man)
The context; “separating”	The inhabitants; “according to kind”

Humankind – Relational being

► Relating to God

- Image of God (1:27)
- Agent of God to manage creation (servant ruler) (1:28)
- Speaks with God: “Adam, where art thou?” (3:9)

► Relating to Creation

- Formed from dust of earth (2:7)
- Together with other land animals on 6th day
- Breath of life (1:30, 2:7); reproduction (1:22,28)
- Source of wonder; feelings of insignificance (Ps 8)

Humankind – Relating to each other

▶ Relationships

- Not good for man to be alone (2:18)
- No suitable helper among the created order (2:20)
- Similar, yet different; the “other” (culture, gender)

▶ Man & Woman

- Equality (w.r.t. God & creation)
 - ▶ Created man and woman (1:27)
 - ▶ Out of man’s side (not head or foot) (2:21)
- Complementarity (w.r.t. each other)
 - ▶ Diversity as in the Trinity (image of God)
 - ▶ One flesh – sexuality (2:24)

Work and Rest

▶ Work

- Self-fulfillment (true to image of God, the creator)
- Co-operation with God – nature & nurture
- Interaction with earth – till (serve) & keep (protect) (2:15)

▶ Rest

- God rested from creating, not from sustaining (2:2-3)
- A pattern for man – work & rest
- Rest for the earth too (Lev 25)

Creation: Questions for Discussion

- ▶ What aspects of the “image of God” are seen most clearly in humans in Gen 1-2?
- ▶ In what relationships are humans described as being both similar and different?
- ▶ What should our attitude and actions be towards our environment?

CREATION

Implications



Divine Providence & Human Response

▶ Divine Providence

- God owns us as our creator
- God is ultimately in control of nature

▶ Human Response

- Our response to God is to allow his control
- Our “instruction manual” is the Word of God
- Our attitude to the universe is humility, whether in studying it or harnessing its bounty or challenging its limits
- We are called to contribute towards improving and sustaining the world in partnership with God

Environmental Implications

- We are part of the environment too (humility and identity)
 - But, we are not merely equal to other species
 - As God's agents we are but stewards, not owners of the earth
 - We serve the environment in servant leadership (responsibility, not equality)
 - "Take good care of the Earth; it is loaned to us by our children, not given us to us by our parents" – African proverb
 - We rely on God and exercise restraint; and not merely look for a "technological fix"
 - A need for personal & corporate responses (transport, food, water, waste, energy)
- Note: God's original plan in Gen 1 was for us to be vegetarian

Christianity and Science

► Harmony, not Conflict

- The Bible deals with “why?”; Science with “how?”
- The universe can have two mutually independent explanations – the scientific to describe methods; the religious to explain purpose
- Example: *Why did Ophelia die?* (CS Lewis)
(branch broke; Shakespeare wanted her to)
- The description of our origins in the Bible is not scientific but literary and religious
- The scientific revolution in Europe was led by men who sought to discover God’s laws in nature

Humanity

▶ Human Equality

- The “image of God” is the basis for equality and Human Rights; also the incarnation
- We are defined by this common humanity; not accidents of birth or attainments in life

▶ Work and Rest

- Work has intrinsic value, including unpaid work (i.e. work is not merely for earning)
- Rest relativizes feelings of indispensability
- Workers need rest (and protection in general)

Relationality

▶ Promoting Relationality

- Public policy, technology and social practices should promote relationality, not fragmentation

▶ Human Relationships

- Unity in diversity; relating to the "other"
- Gender equality
(Feminism – an attempt at redressing the balance)
- Faithful, lifelong partnership in marriage to "other"
(one flesh, leave parents, heterosexuality)

FALL

Doctrine



The Covenant: God gave...

▶ Liberal permission

- Eat of any tree in the garden (2:16)

▶ Single prohibition

- Except from Tree of knowledge of good & evil (2:17)
- Moral independence of God – deciding what is right & wrong; rather than obedience to God

▶ Explicit warning

- “you will surely die” (2:17)

The Temptation: Satan denied...

▶ God's goodness

- Focused on single prohibition (3:1)

▶ God's holiness

- Eve downplayed warning: "lest you die" (3:3)
- Satan contradicted it: "you will not surely die" (3:4)

▶ God's otherness

- "will be like God" (3:5) – already like God (appropriately)
- Note: denying each other's otherness (fig leaves)

Temptation: the areas

- ▶ Good for food: hedonism (Gen 3:6)
 - Lust of the flesh (1 Jn 2:16)
 - cf. stones into bread (Lk 4:3)
- ▶ Pleasing to eye: materialism (Gen 3:6)
 - Lust of the eyes (1 Jn 2:16)
 - cf. kingdoms of the world (Lk 4:6-7)
- ▶ Desirable for wisdom: pride (Gen 3:6)
 - Pride of life (1 Jn 2:16)
 - cf. jumping from temple (Lk 4:9-11)
- ▶ Note: Jesus overcame by listening to (another) Word
- ▶ Note: Richard Foster: Money, Sex, Power

Immediate Result: Guilt

- ▶ Ashamed of themselves (3:7)
 - But leaves inadequate
- ▶ Hid from God (3:8)
 - But trees inadequate
- ▶ Blamed each other (3:12)
 - Adam blames woman, and God who gave her

Proximate Result: Judgment

▶ Serpent

- Crawl on belly; ultimately crushed (3:14-15)

▶ Woman

- Husband's rule; childbearing in pain (3:16)
- But offspring to crush serpent (3:15b)

▶ Man

- Ground cursed (3:17-18)
- Labour in work (3:19a)
- Mortality (3:19a)

Mystery of Evil

- ▶ Temptation is occasion, not cause of sin (Jas 1:14)
- ▶ Sin nature: (representative headship) (Rom 5:12-19)
 - Entered thro' Adam the first man
 - Conquered thro' Christ the second Adam
- ▶ God's provision for Adam (Gen 3:21-23)
 - Fig leaves not enough
 - Provided with skins – after shedding of blood
 - But still banished from garden

Curbing Evil through limitations

- ▶ No access to Tree of life (Gen 3)
 - Death curbs evil
- ▶ Tower of Babel (Gen 11)
 - Language differences curb mass power
- ▶ Jubilee (Lev 25)
 - Limitation & redistribution of land ownership (50 years)
 - Limits to cultivating the earth (7 years)

The Lasting Duality (Gen 4)

- ▶ Separation from God, yet life continues
 - Common grace; looking forward to saving grace
- ▶ Separation from each other, yet society continues
 - Marriage, childbearing, family, legal systems
 - Provision even for murderer; mark of Cain (4:13-15)
- ▶ Separation from earth, yet cultivation continues
 - Also technology, urbanization
- ▶ Separation from ourselves, yet humanity continues
 - “total depravity” – not degree but extent of wickedness

Fall: Questions for Discussion

- ▶ Could God have created us so that we would not sin?
- ▶ What are the positive and negative aspects of guilt and shame?
- ▶ How can we shape social structures (political, economic) that are made up of fallen human beings?

FALL

Implications



Free Will

- ▶ Could God have created us so that we would not sin?
 - Created in God's image – a moral image
 - Inability to sin implies inability to be "good"
 - The value of freedom
- ▶ God's participation in our suffering
 - A pained father (Lk 15); a rejected lover (Hosea)
 - Jesus' incarnation
 - ▶ Identification in predicament
 - ▶ Paid penalty for our sins - atonement
 - Redemption brings us closer to God than Creation
 - Suffering can bring out the best in humans

Accepting the Human Duality

- ▶ Possesses both Dignity and Depravity
- ▶ Capable of great good and great evil
(man's inhumanity to man worse than law of jungle)
- ▶ We should not be surprised by human evil
- ▶ We should take steps against human evil
 - Restraint
 - Regulation
 - Redemption

Guilt & Shame

- ▶ Guilt & Shame a part of our psyche'
- ▶ Can be both positive and negative
- ▶ Shame can be a restraint, BUT shame for wrong reasons can lead to evil or harm
- ▶ Guilt can be corrosive, BUT "godly grief" is to be desired (2 Cor 7:8-12)
- ▶ Guilt and Shame can be incentives for good, though not the best motivation (like love)

Restraint

▶ Education

- Associated with Christian mission
- But can be used to promote social control!

▶ Family

- Context for instruction

▶ Discipline

- Through both education and family
- Note: etiquette associated with bodily functions

▶ Religion

- Transcendent motivations

Regulation

- ▶ Legal provisions & safeguards
(words alone are not sufficient)
- ▶ Safeguards for the wrongdoers
- ▶ Social structures
(Note: laws & structures can promote evil too)
- ▶ Limits to power (Power corrupts, specially if absolute)
(extent, duration, checks & balances, guarding the guardians)
- ▶ An attitude of suspicion (of ourselves & others)
(Note: creation inspires curiosity; the fall demands suspicion)
- ▶ Calls for unity or peace can be suspicious
(specially if dissent and justice are not given their place)
- ▶ The role of religion - prophetic, not legitimizing

Redemption - I

▶ Personal conversion

- All persons need conversion
- Depravity is not a barrier to redemption
- Respectability can be a stumbling block

▶ The role of the church

- The repository of the gospel
- Comfort the disturbed
- Disturb the comfortable

Redemption - II

▶ Redeeming social structures

- Identifying with the "other", the outcast
- Tackling both victims and causes
- Civil disobedience
- Ministering to the oppressed AND the oppressor

▶ The role of the church

- Model of redeemed community
- Salt & light & leaven

REDEMPTION

Doctrine



God's Plan for Redemption

▶ Progressive Revelation

- Adam clothed by God with skins, not leaves
- Choosing of community through which to reveal
- Liberation from Egypt – paradigm of redemption
- Sacrificial system

▶ Sacrificial System

- Trusting in God's provision, not "works"; (despite having ritual – circumcision; and the law)
- Shedding of blood - salvation free but not cheap
- Looked forward to Jesus' perfect sacrifice

The Chosen Community

- ▶ To live by the law (internal)
 - Personal morality (e.g. 10 commandments)
 - Social, Political, Economic, Environmental ethics (e.g. land laws in Lev 25)
 - Law is also an instrument to reveal sin
 - Other provisions – prophets, priests, kings
- ▶ To be a light to others (external)
 - Chosen, not merited
 - Witness to God's wisdom & greatness
 - Punished when disobedient

Jesus the fulfillment of Redemption

- ▶ Fulfillment of law & prophets; also of kings and priests (note: both priest & sacrifice)
- ▶ Prophetic role – in teaching & announcing the inauguration of God's kingdom (rule)
- ▶ Kingly role – accepted worship; future consummation
- ▶ Priestly role – perfect sacrifice; set face towards death; disproportionate amount of gospels given to last week of Jesus' life
- ▶ Resurrection – God's vindication of his plan

Historical Christ-Events

- ▶ Two major/unique Christological miracles
 - Incarnation (Christmas) - private
 - Resurrection (Easter) - public
- ▶ How to assess the "facts"?
 - Scientifically? (but science deals with repeatable phenomena)
 - Philosophically? (is this an open or closed universe?)
 - Historically? (the proper approach to unique events?)
- ▶ Historical criteria
 - Eyewitness accounts
 - Circumstantial evidence

Eyewitness Accounts

- ▶ The overwhelming likelihood of Jesus' death
 - Blood & water from side; soldiers not breaking knees (Jn 19:31-37)
- ▶ Testimony that "rings true" about resurrection appearances – resurrection not anticipated!
 - Seen first by women (not admitted as witnesses) (Jn 20:18)
 - Doubted by Thomas, a disciple (Jn 20:25)
 - Doubts about Jesus' identity (Jn 21:4,12)
 - Seen simultaneously by large number (not hallucination) (1 Cor 15:4-8)
 - Although prophesied in past, not understood by disciples (Lk 24:13-32)

Circumstantial Evidence

▶ The missing body

- Jews: Precautions & propaganda (Mt 27:62-66 & 28:11-15)
- Could have been produced by enemies

▶ The growth of the church

- In the face of great opposition and persecution
- Could the disciples have stolen the body and given their lives for a lie?
- How did the frightened disciples become bold?

Saved by Grace thro' Faith for Works

(Eph 2:1-10)

- ▶ From death to life - personal dimension
- ▶ By Grace – God's Riches At Christ's Expense
 - God's justification on basis of Christ's death as substitute
- ▶ Through Faith; Not through Works
 - Appropriation of grace not automatic, but thro' Faith
 - Acknowledgement of poverty; Reliance on Christ
 - Blow to Pride; Unmerited (grace)
 - Q: Is faith also a gift of God; or can anyone exercise it?
- ▶ But for Good works
 - Result of salvation, in gratefulness & obedience
 - Sanctification – a process

Breaking the dividing wall of hostility

(Eph 2:11-22)

- ▶ Way to God open to all – social dimension
- ▶ Abolishing legalism that excludes outsiders
- ▶ From exclusion to inclusion for outsider
- ▶ Jesus himself: from Jew to “new man”
- ▶ “In himself one new man”
 - Jesus’ life: demonstrated breaking of barriers
 - Jesus death: from Jew to “new man” through death & resurrection
 - The church: body of Christ - to demonstrate unity

Some Technical Terms

- ▶ **Redemption:** buying back, paying ransom
- ▶ **Atonement, Expiation:** making amends
- ▶ **Propitiation:** appeasing an angry God (KJV)
- ▶ **Justification:** declared not guilty (penalty of sin) (Rom 5)
 - God considers us as “clothed” by Christ
- ▶ **Sanctification:** growth in holiness (power of sin) (Rom 6,7)
 - Identification: We consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God Christ (as Christ died & rose; baptism)
- ▶ **Glorification:** in new creation (presence of sin) (Rom 8)

Redemption: Questions for Discussion

- ▶ Think of a good illustration for the relationship between faith and grace.
- ▶ Have you come across any children's stories that affirm the *repentant* person as opposed to the "good" person?
- ▶ In what practical ways can the church experience and demonstrate the breaking of barriers between the "insiders" and "outsiders" in our society?

REDEMPTION

Implications



Changed Individual Lives

▶ Attitudes

- Gratefulness
- Humility - absence of pride

▶ Allegiance - Lordship of Christ in all areas

- Settled opposition to sin
- Seeking God's will actively
- Not accepting any higher allegiance (e.g. family, country)
- Allowing God's sway in choices – such as career, marriage partner, place of abode

▶ Alignment

- To fellow followers of Christ (the church)
- To the outcast and excluded; often against the powerful

Some Disciplines

- ▶ Prayer – conversing with God
 - ▶ Fasting – repentance, intercession, preparation
 - ▶ Bible Study – discovering God's will
- Note: Prayer & Study: individually & collectively
- ▶ Fellowship – local church
 - Commitment to both "get" and "give"
 - ▶ Giving – time, talents, money (tithing?)

The Church

▶ Model of redeemed community

- Love for one another (including loving defiance)
- Place where barriers are being broken
- Experiences God's gifts for mutual flourishing

▶ Agents for change in world

- Salt – preserving the world
- Light – enlightening the world

Note: Salt & Light – small doses; different to, mixed with and influences environment

- Leaven – influencing without highlighting difference (e.g. for healing between hostile communities)

Communicating the Gospel

- ▶ Making gospel relevant to the world
 - Jesus, one of us, but provocative
- ▶ Joining the conversations of others
 - Not repeating a formula
- ▶ Witnessing by words (propositions) as well as works (provocations)
- ▶ Some cultural barriers:
 - Scientific culture – rejects transcendence
 - Postmodern culture – rejects “grand narratives”
 - Secular culture – rejects “particularism”

Redeeming Social Structures

- ▶ Identifying with the “other”, the outcast
 - Sharing life, Mutual learning
- ▶ Tackling both victims and causes
 - Partnership with others of goodwill
- ▶ Civil disobedience
 - Clash of allegiance between Church & State

We live by His Resurrection

- ▶ Vindication of Good over Evil
- ▶ Energy and empowerment in struggles
- ▶ Hope for personal history beyond death
 - Resurrection of the "Second Adam" - "firstfruits"
- ▶ Hope that God will establish his rule
 - Resurrection is a sign of God's power
 - Not a vague hope in the face of hopelessness

CONSUMMATION

Doctrine



The New Man: Continuity & Change

(1 Cor 15:35-58)

- ▶ Prototype in Resurrected Christ (“firstfruits”)
- ▶ “Representative headship” – we inherit nature (e.g. of Adam, of Christ)
- ▶ Glorification (Rom 8:18-24)
- ▶ Our present and future bodies: different
 - As in what is sown and reaped (1 Cor 15)
 - Not “unclothed” but “further clothed” (2 Cor 5:4)
- ▶ Our present and future bodies: similar
 - Physical, “Embodied” (e.g. information metaphor)
 - Disembodied soul a myth? A Greek idea?

The New Heaven & New Earth

- ▶ Nature waiting for liberation (Rom 8:19-21)
- ▶ Culture brought to new Jerusalem (Rev 21:22-27)
 - Kings of earth bring their splendour
 - Nothing impure
- ▶ Continuity & Change
- ▶ Physical and not merely "soul-ish"
- ▶ God's kingdom (rule) established

Who will be saved?

- ▶ Those “washed in blood of the Lamb” (Rev)
- ▶ Dependence on Jesus’ atoning sacrifice
- ▶ Those who do not trust in their goodness
 - Parable of Pharisee & Publican (Lk 18:9-14)
- ▶ How about those who do not “name” Christ?
 - Old Testament believers
 - Non Christians who are aware of inadequacies
 - Those who, in humility, manifest kingdom values
 - Note: universalism, inclusivism, exclusivism

What will be saved?

- ▶ Nature & Culture
- ▶ Goodness & Justice, BUT NOT Evil
- ▶ Relationships, BUT NOT Marriage
- ▶ Work & Responsibility (Parables of Stewards)
- ▶ Justice, BUT NOT Politics (Christ is LORD)
- ▶ Note: An authentic reward is a continuation of the activity that is rewarded (CS Lewis)

Judgement

- ▶ Certainty of judgement
 - After death
 - At Christ's return
- ▶ Of those without Christ
 - Individuals (Rom 1-3)
 - Systems – e.g. Babylon (Rev 13)
- ▶ Of those in Christ
 - Accountability (stewardship, watching)
 - Difference in rewards (1 Cor 3:12-14)

Sting of death (separation) removed

- ▶ Sting of death is separation (e.g. from family)
- ▶ Separation of Personal & Political history
 - Pietism – “This world will be separated from me” (hence, focus on personal salvation)
 - Activism – “I will be separated from this world” (hence, make sacrifices for political change)
- ▶ Healing of separation by Christ’s resurrection
 - i.e. both personal & political history will continue

Consummation: Questions for Discussion

- ▶ If Christ has triumphed over sin and we accept his salvation, why do we still experience the effects of sin (death, illness, sinfulness, injustice)?
- ▶ If Jesus (our forerunner) had a body after his resurrection, why do we think of a mere "soul" as surviving death?
- ▶ If we are looking forward to another world, how should that be reflected in the way we live now?

CONSUMMATION

Implications



The "already" and the "not yet"

(Period between Resurrection & Consummation)

Areas	"Already"	"Not yet"
Knowledge	Mystery of salvation revealed	Full & complete, "face to face" knowledge of God
Health	Healed by his stripes; energized by Spirit	Every tear wiped away; death destroyed
Holiness	Victory over penalty & (partly) power of sin	Complete holiness; presence of sin removed
Justice	Church and Holy Spirit fight against injustice	Swords to ploughshares; Christ judge of nations
Type of Christian	Optimistic (thinks the "not yet" is "already"); can get disillusioned	Pessimistic (thinks even the "already" is "not yet"; can block God's agency)

Pilgrims and Watchers

▶ Pilgrims

- No permanent abode (OT: wilderness journey, NT: Son of Man nowhere to lay head)
- Hold possessions lightly
- Joyous (since redeemed), yet sorrowful (at state of the world, including ourselves)

▶ Watchers

- Not passively, but actively discharging duties
- Waiting for hostility & imperfection to be removed
- Warning the world of impending doom

Living by Faith

- ▶ Assurance, conviction; not certainty
- ▶ Doubt is to faith as fear is to courage
- ▶ What is important?
 - Not the amount of faith (mustard seed), but its object (Jesus)
 - Not the strength of conviction, but the taking of action (show faith by works)
- ▶ Main areas of application:
 - Uncomfortable decisions & unpopular discipleship in the context of the resurrection & the consummation
 - cf. World War 2 between D-day & VE day (for allies)
 - Not so relevant to healing and blessing

The church as a sign of kingdom

▶ Model of kingdom

- Kingdom relationships – equality, inclusiveness
- Upholding kingdom values - justice

▶ Agent for establishing kingdom in the world

- Promoting kingdom values
- Challenging injustice
- Proclaiming the king

▶ The celebration of Last Supper as a sign

- Remember His death (we die to ourselves)
- Live by His resurrection (we experience & display power)
- Look for His coming again (we're dissatisfied, expectant)

The need to be judged

- ▶ God is our judge; Bible is our yardstick; Holy Spirit our critic
- ▶ For replacement; improvement
- ▶ As individuals (360° assessment?)
- ▶ As societies
 - Evaluating, changing rulers
 - Cultural norms
- ▶ Basis of evolution – biological, cultural

A call to Holistic Mission

- ▶ Both Personal and Political
- ▶ Personal: Both individual & community
- ▶ Political:
 - Both victims & causes
 - Both mercy & justice (also truth & reconciliation)
- ▶ Witness:
 - Incarnational (Identifying with the "outsiders")
 - Eschatological (Great future times, not good old days)
 - By words (proclamation) & works (provocation)