

Session 2: Introduction to Biblical Worldview

I. REVIEW

- A. In the previous session we looked at the role that a worldview has on our perception, interaction, and response to reality. A worldview is essentially a complex system of assumptions that we all have about reality. Because we all 'see in part' our mind fills in the blanks.
1. *"the culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments/allegiances underlying a people's perception of reality and their responses to those perceptions."*¹
 2. *"the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing natural philosophy; fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions, and ethics."*²
- B. Both the ability to perceive these strongholds of the mind and to overcome them are a work of the Holy Spirit. All worldviews, not birthed by the Holy Spirit through repentance, are essentially demonic and simply serve to keep men from the knowledge of the Creator's true nature and slaves to the god of this age.
- ⁵ We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, (2Cr 10:5 NASB)***
- C. The worldview within the Western world (*including the Western Church*) is essentially Platonic. This view teaches a strong distinction between an etherealized 'realm of ideals' and a material 'perceptual realm'.
- D. This worldview, while introduced by Plato and Socrates, was introduced into the frame work of Western theology through a man named Origen of Alexandria. The vehicle by which it happened was a school of theology which was founded by Clement and later lead by Origen.
- E. The school taught this Platonic worldview as a means of understanding the Scripture. The primary means of synthesizing Christianity with Platonism was by the introduction of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture.³
- F. The impact of this school upon theology was far reaching. Heaven, was first relegated to the etherealized 'intelligible realm', rendering it immaterial and practically irrelevant. The observable creation was relegated to the physical and corrupt 'perceptual realm', thus making the heavens and the earth completely incompatible by nature.

¹ Charles Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 52

² Gary B. Palmer, *Toward A Theory of Cultural Linguistics* (University of Texas Press, 1996), 114.

³ Although Philo (20 B.C. – 50 A.D.) was the first to introduce the allegorical interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, it's influence on Christianity for the first 200 years after the ascension were insignificant. The School of Alexandria became the first place within Christianity to present the allegorical interpretation with the agenda to synthesize it with Greek philosophy.

- G. The logical end of creation as a whole was the annihilation of the perceptual realm, and the absorption of what was once material into the realm of 'true spirits'. This created a framework of thought which viewed a literal second coming of Christ back to the earth as impossible. Thus perverting the eschatology and hope of the church.

II. BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

The decisive question of Christian testimony is not whether it is palatable, but whether it is true.
– Thomas C. Oden

- A. Even with the church, the belief that the Scripture can or should establish us within a sound worldview it is really somewhat rare. The assumption is that the men who wrote the Scripture were inspired by God to give us theology, but they were ignorant in regards to most matters of worldview, cosmology (*the layout of the cosmos*), and science.
- B. The Scripture is able to keep us subjectively on the path of righteousness, but it is also fully capable of giving us the whole playing field upon which we are playing.

¹⁰⁵ ***Your word is a lamp to my feet (subjective) And a light to my path (objective). (Psa 119:105 NASB)***

- C. In the past several years there has been a lot of effort put into various works attempting to restore a "Biblical worldview" within which to interpret the Scriptures – primarily the Apostolic writings⁴. While there have been many helpful discoveries and insights, *almost* all of them ignore the core assumption upon which all others rest – **metaphysics**.
- D. Metaphysics is simply the answer to two questions, "What is the sum total of reality?" and "What is it like? Or what is it's nature?" Metaphysics is the primary and **core assumption within all worldviews**. For example, how would you ever communicate how a game of a football is to be played if the person has no understanding of the dimensions of a football field? (*Fishbowl Conundrum*.)
- E. The Scripture begins with the interpretive key for all metaphysics. All theology is then interpreted within this core assumption. Thus, leaving us the central playing field upon which the fall, election, redemption, restoration, eschatology, etc... are established. Like the football field example, it is difficult to explain who Joe Montana is, what he is like, and what his heart is like unless we understand the court within which he plays.

III. THE HEAVENS - THE EXPANSE AMIDST THE WATERS

⁴ N.T. Wright is commonly associated with the "New Perspectives on Paul" movement – one of the largest movements attempting to uncover an authentic perspective on the first century paradigm within which the listeners would have heard the Gospel. While some have used the 'new perspective' as a means of furthering a liberal agenda (i.e. Krister Kendhal), some like Wright appear to have a more sincere love for the truth behind their pursuit of an alternate worldview.

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens (heb. 'shamayim', KJV 'heaven') and the earth. ² The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters... ⁶ Then God said, "Let there be an expanse (heb. 'raqia') in the midst of the waters (heb. 'mayim'), and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse heaven (heb. 'shamayim', NIV/NRSV/NLT 'sky').... (Gen 1:1-8 NASB)

- A. The heavens are an expanse (heb. 'raqia')⁵ which lies in the midst of the waters. At the time of creation, the Lord created an expanse or He cleared a space in the midst of the cosmic waters so that He could dwell there.

⁵ Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens (heb. 'shamayim') and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it, (Isa 42:5 NASB)

²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²² It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens (heb. 'shamayim') like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ²³ He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. (Isa 40:21-23 NASB)

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ² Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven (heb. 'shamayim') like a tent curtain. ³ He lays the beams (heb. 'qarah', NLT 'rafters') of His upper chambers (heb. 'aliyah') in the waters; ... (Psa 104:1-3 NASB)

¹ Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! ² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! ⁴ Praise Him, highest heavens (heb. 'shamayim'), And the waters that are above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. (Psa 148:1-5 NASB)

- B. The heavens are located geographically above the earth.

¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. (Gen 6:17 NIV)

⁵ The heavens are frequently described in figurative language as having windows (Gen 7:11; 2Kings 7:2...), gates (Gen 28:7), doors (Psa 78:23), pillars (Job 26:11), and foundations (2Sam 22:8). They are stretched out and spread out like a tent or a curtain (Isa 40:22). The use of such figurative language no more necessitates the adoption of a pagan cosmology than does the modern use of the term 'sunrise' imply astronomical ignorance... Thus a disobedient Israel would find the heavens to be like iron (Lev 26:19) or like bronze (Deut 28:23), not yielding the much-needed rain. Note that if the heavens were conceived of as a metallic vault, as is commonly suggested from Gen 1:8, 14 etc., the above passages would be meaningless, since the skies would already be metal. The word raqia' (q.v.) comes from the verb meaning 'to hammer out' and 'stretch (a piece of metal) out' as an overlay. It is the idea of spreading out that carries over to the noun, not the idea of a metallic substance. 'Expanse' is an acceptable translation." ("shamayim," TWOT, 2407a)

³⁹ ***"Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. (Deu 4:39 NASB)***

¹ ***Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. (2Ch 7:1 NASB)***

¹¹ ***They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Act 1:11 NASB)***

C. The heavens (the 'shamayim') are the dwelling place of God.

¹⁵ ***'Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel... (Deu 26:15 NASB)***

³⁰ ***"Listen to the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place; hear in heaven Your dwelling place; hear and forgive. (1Ki 8:30 NASB)***

¹ ***Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ² Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven (heb. 'shamayim') like a tent curtain. ³ He lays the beams (heb. 'qarah', NLT 'rafters') of His upper chambers (heb. 'aliyah') in the waters; ... (Psa 104:1-3 NASB)***

D. Moreover, the Scripture also clearly portrays the heavens as a physical location. Heaven is not a "realm"⁶ of ideas, concepts, or principles as Plato, Origen, and Augustine would have us construe them. Rather, God fashioned a dwelling place for Himself **within the metaphysical construct** where He dwells there in the heights of the heavens.

¹ ***In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. ⁵ Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. (Isa 6:1-6 NASB)***

⁶ The phrase 'heavenly realm' or 'realm of heaven' is entirely absent from the Scriptures. While the word 'realm' implies the jurisdiction of an actual government, the phrase 'heavenly realm' became a means of reinforcing the assumption of its immateriality. The NIV uses the phrase 'heavenly realm' throughout the book of Ephesians to translate the Greek *epouranios* – which is simply the plural form of heaven.

⁹ ***"I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. ¹⁰ "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. (Dan 7:9-10 NASB)***

⁹ ***Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. ¹¹ Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank. ¹² Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there..." ⁹ According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. (Exd 24:9-12, 25:9 NASB)***

- E. While we've not touched on the full theological implications of the clarification of the Biblical worldview and cosmology, even these few verses that we have gone over here have a dramatic impact on the way that we view God. **Theology is simply the study of the way God is.** The way you think about God, and thus interpret the rest of the Scripture about Him, is radically different based on where He chooses to dwell.
- F. It not only affects the way that we view His heart, but there are dramatic implications on the way He interacts with creation if He dwells within it. We may have been trained to process it theologically, but there is a significant breakdown between the God who is enthroned directly above the football field (using the prior analogy) observing all of the affairs of men, and the God who lives in another 'realm' and is thus completely removed.
- G. The actual dwelling place of God is a physical place located in the highest of heavens. This is frequently called in the Scripture the 'heaven of the heavens' or 'shamay h'shamayim'.

¹⁴ ***"Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens (heb. shamay h'shamayim), the earth and all that is in it. (Deu 10:14 NASB)***

¹⁵ ***For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place... (Isa 57:15 NASB)***

² ***I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven. (2Cr 12:2 NASB)***

IV. THE THRONE OF GOD IN THE HEAVENS

- A. The heavens are not simply the dwelling place of God, **but the physical center of his Government.** When He made the heavens and the earth, God established His own throne in the heavens. He established His throne and thus, His kingdom in the highest heavens.

¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (Psa 103:19 ESV)

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. (Rev 4:2 NASB)

² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed... ⁴ He who sits (Heb. 'yashab' NIV 'enthroned') in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. (Psa 2:2, 4 NASB)

¹ A Song of Ascents. To You I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens! (Psa 123:1 NASB)

- B. After creating the earth, the heavens and everything that dwells inside of them, the Lord rested on the seventh day – sitting down as the supreme ruler of everything created⁷. Thus the throne is often referenced in context to creation and it's inhabitants.

² By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested⁸ (Heb. 'shabbot') on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. (Gen 2:2 NASB)

¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned (Heb. 'yashab') above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth (cf. Gen 11 – tower of Babel). You have made heaven and earth. (2Ki 19:15 NASB)

⁴ The LORD is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens. ⁵ Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high, ⁶ Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in heaven and in the earth? (Psa 113:4-6 NASB)

²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²² It is He who sits (Heb. 'yashab', NIV 'enthroned') above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. (Isa 40:21-22 NASB)

V. THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE

- A. The terminology of the temple is very common in our current understanding of the Old Testament worship. We seldom, however, consider an actual temple in the height of the heavens as the prototype from which it originated.
- B. When upon Mt. Sinai, Moses was shown a pattern that he was then commanded to replicate on the earth. What he was shown was an actual physical temple in the height of the heavens.

⁷ Although it is not thoroughly developed in the Scripture, there is not any reference to God's throne existing prior to creation. The simple logic of this being that there first needed to be subjects over which to govern.

⁸ The Hebrew words 'yashab' and 'shabbot', while not etymologically related, fit within the same semantic domain. They are related much like the association with sitting as the means of resting.

⁹ *Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,*
¹⁰ *and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.* ¹¹ *Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank.* ¹² *Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there..."* ⁹ *According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. (Exd 24:9-12, 25:9 NASB)*

¹ *Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,* ² *a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.* ⁴ *...there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;* ⁵ *who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."* (Hbr 8:1-5 NASB)

²⁴ *For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; (Hbr 9:24 NASB)*

- C. Five of the psalms of David reference God's temple. The problem with a casual reading of these passages is that there was no temple during David's lifetime. Thus, he must have been referencing something different.

⁷ *But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You. (Psa 5:7 NASB)*

⁶ *In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears. (Psa 18:6 NASB)*

⁴ *One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple. (Psa 27:4 NASB)*

⁴ *How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. (Psa 65:4 NASB)*

² *I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name. (Psa 138:2 NASB)*

- D. The word used by David – here translated 'temple' – is clearly not a reference to the temporary dwelling of the tabernacle which resided in Gibeon during his lifetime or the tent which he erected on Mt. Zion known as David's tabernacle.
- E. The word used here, *hekal*, always refers to a **physical structure or a complex**. The words used to describe both the tabernacle of David and the tabernacle of Moses fit into a totally separate semantic domain. **Thus, the use of *hekal* as a substitute for either of these words would be similar to looking at a camping tent and exclaiming, "What a beautiful building!"**

- F. Moreover, the word *hekal*, Sumerian/Akkadian in its origin, does not even necessarily mean a religious structure. Of the 80 times that this word is used in the Hebrew Old Testament, 23 are translated “nave” or “palace” in the ESV. Thus, in three of the five references, David uses the adjective ‘*qadas*’ (translated ‘*holy*’) to associate the holy nature of the building or complex.
- G. This presents us with a more accurate understanding of what David and the Patriarchs before Him understood. In the highest heavens there is a palace or temple in which God dwells. It is here specifically, and not heaven generically, where God dwells and where He has set His throne.

⁴ The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. (Psa 11:4 NASB)

² Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You for help, When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary. (Psa 28:2 NASB)

⁹ ... in his temple all cry, "Glory!" ¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. (Psa 29:9-10 ESV)

² Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains, And let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple. ³ For behold, the LORD is coming forth from His place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. (Mic 1:2-3 NASB)

¹ In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ... ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. (Isa 6:1, 4 NASB)⁹

VI. THE ORIGINAL GLORY OF THE EARTH

- A. Beginning to look at the second half of Biblical cosmogeny, I want to reiterate the goal of all instruction. Because of the all encompassing nature of the study of worldview, it can often result in both an elitist spirit as well as an exaltation of the information as an end in itself.
- B. Having a Biblical worldview simply serves to anchor us in an accurate and sound instruction regarding Biblical theology. Which in turn serves to fuel that which is of ultimate importance – to walk on a narrow path in righteousness and humility as we wait for our blessed hope.

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, (Tts 2:11-13 NASB)

⁹ Isaiah is simply seeing what Leviticus 16 reveals through shadows about the Day of Atonement. i.e the Day of the Lord. The throne, the angels above, the smoke filling the room, etc... Thus, Isaiah sees that his life is in danger as he beholds the Lord getting ready to release the day of the Lord. Also see the full revelation of this moment in Rev. 15:5-8.

- C. The primary accusation against the earth within Platonism is its inherent wickedness. The wide spread assumption of a dualism within theology has led to nearly countless perversions of the hope of the Patriarchs and the apostles.
- D. Within this framework, salvation has been assumed to imply an escape from materiality.

“And again he says, ‘We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ [after escaping materiality] We are therefore to suppose that the saints will remain there [in their progress to heaven] until they recognize the twofold mode of government in those things which are performed in the air... If any one indeed be pure in heart, and holy in mind, and more practiced in perception, he will, by making more rapid progress, quickly ascend to a place in the air, and reach the kingdom of heaven [through the practice of ‘perception’], through those mansions, so to speak, in the various places which the Greeks have termed spheres, i.e., globes, but which holy Scripture has called heavens; in each of which he will first see clearly what is done there, and in the second place, will discover the reason why things are so done: and thus he will in order pass through all gradations, following Him who hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, who said, ‘I will that where I am, these may be also.’ And of this diversity of places He speaks, when He says, ‘In My Father’s house are many mansions.’”¹⁰

- E. The sovereignty of God has been assumed to be dominion of materiality by immateriality.

“It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy, and it is of this first resurrection in the present life, that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted [cf. Rev. 20:1-6]. For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, ‘And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given.’ It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but to the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in the words, ‘What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’”¹¹

- F. **The gospel message is essentially a message of restoration, which rests upon the assumption of a perfect original creation.** The problem that we have with understanding eschatology and assimilating this hope into our normal lives rests, in large part, upon our lack of belief in Genesis 1-3.

¹⁰ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book II, chapter 11

¹¹ (Augustine, *City of God*, Book XX, Chapter 9

- G. Human beings were made to live forever. The human body was not made to perish. The first humans lived with bodies which perpetually regenerated in a world which existed completely free from death. Being made in God's image, we were not meant to die.

***¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die (lit. 'dying you will die')."* (Gen 2:17 NASB)**

- H. The introduction of death into creation was an utter perversion to God's original perfect creation. The 'curse' which was pronounced upon Adam, Eve, the serpent, and onto creation itself was the curse of death being introduced.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." ¹⁶ To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return." (Gen 3:15-19 NASB)

VII. DEVELOPING A THEOLOGY OF RESTORATION

- A. The witness of all of God's creation – both the heavens and the earth – is that they are **very good**.

³¹ 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 NASB)

- B. One reason why theories of eschatology abound in the West – *leading to various philosophies regarding the mission of the church* – is that they are seldom anchored in a worldview which demands a restoration of creation rather it's destruction.
- C. Regardless of how well you have consciously thought through all of these implications, the fact is that your decisions in life – and the philosophies which you develop to justify them – are constantly anchored to the direction in which you believe things are headed. *Leaving your driveway before coming to class, you decided whether a right or left hand turn was the best course of action based on your understanding of where you were headed.*
- D. **Eschatology is simply restored cosmogeny** (i.e. the GENesis of the COSMOs). Thus, the proclamation of the Gospel was always in the context of the **restoration of all things rather than their annihilation**.

¹⁹ **"Repent therefore ... ²⁰ "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration (Gr. 'apokatastasis') of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Act 3:19-21 NKJV)**

<605> apokatastasis {ap-ok-at-as'-tas-is} Meaning: 1) restoration 1a) of a true theocracy 1b) of the perfect state before the fall Origin: from 600; TDNT - 1:389,65; n f Usage: AV - restitution 1; 1 [Acts 3:19]

²⁸ **And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration (Gr. 'paliggenesia') when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mat 19:28 NASB)**

<3824> paliggenesia, paliggenesia {pal-ing-ghen-es-ee'-ah} Meaning: 1) new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation, regeneration 1a) hence renovation, regeneration... the word often used to denote the restoration of a thing to its pristine state... 1b) the renovation of the earth after the deluge 1c) the renewal of the world to take place after its destruction by fire...

- E. Then, the blueprint for what we are to expect **in the end** has been laid out **from the beginning**. The Gospel is essentially the 'good news' of a great restoration of all things. The Day of the Lord is simply the day that God has ordained to accomplish this redemption. Not only will man be restored to his formal glory, but creation itself will also be renewed.¹²

⁸ **"Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind... ⁹ "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose (i.e. as it was in the beginning) will be established (i.e. forever), And I will accomplish (i.e. on the Day of the Lord) all My good pleasure (i.e. as in the beginning)'; (Isa 46:8-10 NASB)**

"Studying cosmogeny sets our feet on a solid foundation for eschatological interpretation. Eschatological interpretation is not based on a few random prophetic verses (which often seem to be contradicted by the verses immediately surrounding them), but rather it is based on the primary themes developed in Genesis 1-3. The primary reason the Church today has no ultimate sense of destiny and purpose is because it has no sense of original destiny and purpose."¹³

¹² The language of all of the covenants from the Adamic Covenant on through the New Covenant all refer back to man's original place of eternal life on the earth in perfect fellowship with God (walking with God in the cool of the day). RECONCILE, REDEEM, RESTORE, RECOVER, RETURN, RENEW, REGENERATE, RESURRECT, begin with the prefix "RE" implying a return to an original condition that existed at one point.

¹³ John Harrigan (Biblical Theology of Mission – Course Notes)

- F. *“The Bible is not only consistent from beginning to end, it has a perfect symmetry. The last 3 chapters of Revelation mirror the first 3 of Genesis. At the beginning of Genesis we find the creation, the planting of the Garden of Eden, the marriage of Adam and Eve, and the victory of the serpent. At the end of Revelation, we find the new creation, the restoration of the Garden of Eden, the marriage of Yeshua and His bride, and the defeat of the serpent. In Genesis 3 man sins. In Revelation 20 (3rd from the end), sin comes to its final judgment. [Revelation 20 explains that the serpent of Genesis 3 was actually Satan.] No engineer, architect or contractor in his right mind would ever lay the first brick or dig the first shovel until every last screw, wire and detail of the building were already planned out in the written blueprint. Before God ever said, ‘Let there be light’, He already had planned the ending of the book of Revelation. The rabbis say that the Torah and the Messiah existed before the creation in Genesis. God planned His kingdom ‘before the foundation of the earth (Matthew 25:34, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8).’ Another rabbinic saying goes: ‘the last to be done is the first to be planned.’ Everything in Genesis was done with the final perfection of Revelation already in mind. Before God wrote the first pages of His book, He had a happy ending planned for the last few chapters.”¹⁴*
- G. The assumption of the original perfection helps anchor our thoughts when reading the Scripture. This earth was made, not only as an ideal dwelling place for man, but for God also. So, the subject of the regeneration of creation is always presupposing a restored dwelling of God and man together on the earth.

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day ... (Gen 3:8 NASB)

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, (Rev 21:3 NASB)

³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face... (Rev 22:3-4 NASB)

VIII. SALVATION: REGENERATION VS. ANNIHILATION

- A. The Scripture always speaks of the eternal existence of the earth.

²⁹ Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; ³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. (1 Chronicles 16:29-30 ESV)

⁶⁹ He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever. (Psalm 78:69 NIV)

¹ The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. (Psalm 93:1 ESV)

⁵ He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. (Psalm 104:5 ESV)

¹⁴ Asher Intrater, "Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," Revive Israel Update (5 July 2009)

⁸⁹ Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. ⁹⁰ Your faithfulness (to your word/creation) continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. ⁹¹ Your laws endure to this day, for all things (i.e. the heavens and the earth) serve you ("are your servants" NASB/KJV/NKJV/ESV/NRSV). (Psalm 119:89-91 NIV)

¹ Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. (Psalm 125:1 NIV)

² Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. ³ Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars... ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. ⁶ He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away. (Psalm 148:2-6 NIV)

- B. The guarantee of the perpetuity of the earth is anchored in God's covenant with creation, and thus, to God's own character. God loves the earth, and He will restore His creation.

²⁰ "Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, ²¹ then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. (Jer 33:20-21 ESV)

¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (Rom 11:15 NASB)