

The Whole Counsel of God: CREATION-Fall-Redemption
The Christian Faith and Contemporary Challenges
January 24, 2021

*“Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” (Ps 100:4)*

I. Review: The Whole Counsel of God in “Five Calls”

- A. The Upward Call of God in Christ Jesus
 - 1. **Phil 3:14** – *“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*
- B. The Call to Repentance and Faith
 - 1. **Mark 1:15** – *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*
- C. The Great Commandment
 - 1. **Matt 22:37–39** – *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*
- D. The Great Commission
 - 1. **Matt 28:19–20** – *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”*
- E. The Cultural Mandate
 - 1. **Gen 1:27–28** – *“And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”*
 - a) The Church as “Institution” vs. the Church as “Organism” (Abraham Kuyper)
 - b) Cf. **Eph 1:22** - Paul says God “put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

II. The Bible’s Historical Storyline: Creation – Fall – Redemption

- 1. A Surprising Paradigm?
- 2. Redemption: Accomplished and Applied
- 3. Redemption is Eternal

III. CREATION: What is the most offensive verse in the whole Bible?

- A. God the Creator
 - 1. God is Holy
 - a) **Is 6:3** – *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.”*
 - b) **1 Sam 2:2** – *“There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.”*
 - 2. God is Trinity
 - a) **Matt 28:19** – *“... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*
 - 3. God is Sovereign
 - a) **Ps 115:3** – *“Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.”*
 - b) **Acts 2:23** – *“... this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”*

- c) **Job 42:2** – *“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”*
- 4. God is Personal
 - a) **Ps 33:4** – *“For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.”*

“Modern secular thought is profoundly impersonal, holding that persons are ultimately reducible to things and forces, to matter, motion, time, and chance. Scripture denies this personalism, insisting that all reality, including all value, comes from a supreme personal being.” – John Frame

IV. Creation Mandates (plural!) – Specific, Wise, Good Commands God Gave to Adam/Eve Pre-Fall

- A. **MARRIAGE** – **Gen 2:24** – *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”*
 - 1. Marriage was God’s idea ... and Adam liked it!
- B. **PROCREATION** – **Gen 1:28** – *“Be fruitful and multiply ...”*
 - 1. Adam and Eve exercised their sexual impulses by God’s explicit command and design.
- C. **DOMINION** – **Gen 1:28** – *“... and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*
 - 1. **Is 45:18** – *“For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): ‘I am the Lord, and there is no other.’”* Cf. Hab 2:14.
- D. **LABOR** – **Gen 2:15** – *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”*
 - 1. Labor itself is not a curse, but a blessing.

“The chief incentive in subduing the earth and the chief end to be promoted by it would have been the discovery and exhibition of the manifold wisdom of God” – John Murray

- E. **WEEKLY SABBATH** – **Gen 2:3** – *“So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”*
 - 1. The twin pillars of (a) copying God (Gen 1:27) and (b) God’s promise of rest (Heb 4:9–10).
- F. **THE SPECIAL PROHIBITION** – **Gen 2:16–17** – *“You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*
 - 1. A specific text of Adam’s devotion and faithfulness to God, and a focusing of his cultural obligations.

V. Conclusion

- A. These five mandates reveal the goodness, wisdom, and plan of God.
- B. These five mandates frame the intrusion of sin upon the world.
- C. These five mandates provide arenas for redemptive grace to shine and a template for wisely addressing an array of contemporary challenges!