

THE224 Christian Narrative 2 Redemption

Unit 1a Introduction

Presented by the



LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

For Use by the

Blue Letter Bible Institute

[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)

A Ministry of the

Blue Letter Bible

[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)

Hello and welcome to Christian Narrative 2. My name is Dr. Steve Grusendorf and I'll be your guide as we journey together through this course. I'm really looking forward to our time together in this class. In this first session, I want to do two things. First, I want to talk to you about this course in particular, so we'll cover the areas on which we'll focus and the objectives we'll seek to accomplish together. And second, I want to take a few minutes to discuss the importance and role that a biblical worldview will take in this course. So this course is actually a continuation of what we begin to look at in Christian Narrative 1. Now, in that course, we focused on the first half of the narrative of Scripture: Creation and the Fall. So in this course, we'll continue looking at the story presented to us in the Bible, picking up after the Fall.

If you have your course syllabus handy, I'd like you to go ahead and pull that out right now. Go ahead and do that. Now, look at the course description. It reads, "This course explores the relationship of God to humanity from the vantage point of redemption, that is, Soteriology, looking at the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the doctrine of Regeneration, including the topics of Christology and Pneumatology. The course also explores the new community of the redeemed: the church or Ecclesiology. The future dimension of redemption entailing the events of the last days, that is, Eschatology, also receives attention. So we're going to cover quite a bit of real estate in this course. First, we'll take a look at redemption, like we mentioned just a moment ago. This will include a look at the topics of Christology, Soteriology, and Pneumatology. Now, Christology is the systematic study of Jesus Christ, so we'll begin later in this unit by looking at the person and the work of Jesus Christ. We will continue our investigation into Christology in Unit 2 as we investigate the various offices of Jesus. We will then move to investigate Soteriology. Soteriology is the systematic study of salvation. And we'll look at the various aspects of salvation and how they relate to one another in both Unit 2 and Unit 3 of our time together. Then we'll take a look at Pneumatology. Pneumatology is the systematic study of the Holy Spirit, so we're going to investigate both the nature of the Holy Spirit as well as his role in the life of the Christian in Unit 4. Now, after we talk about redemption in general, we'll then turn our attention to the nature and work of the church. This will be our focus in Unit 5. We will dig into Ecclesiology. I know. All of these big words, right? Ecclesiology is the systematic study of the church. We'll end our time together by taking a look at Eschatology. Eschatology is the study of end times. The final part of God's story in the Bible tells us about how God restores his creation, and Eschatology is our attempt to understand how God will in fact order the restoration of all things.

So while you still have that syllabus handy, I want us to take a look at one other section together. It may seem unimportant, but in fact, it's very critical. Below the course description, you will see a section entitled Student Learning Outcomes. Now, the reason that this portion of your syllabus is very important is because these four points represent our common goals. First, during our time together, we're going to work to develop a basic knowledge of redemption and the doctrines that are related to it. This is why we'll spend several units together exploring the richness of redemption. Second, we will interact with the historical development and the contemporary expressions of redemption. How does this play out in real life? I don't simply want us to look backwards, but I want us to look forward as well. Yes, we need to know how we got where we are, but we also need to understand where God is calling us to go. So my hope is that you will not only academically understand the process of redemption, but that through this course, you will come to better understand what type of difference redemption has made in your day to day life. Third, we will work to relate what we believe into our own personal journey with Jesus Christ and our ministry for his kingdom. Let me be clear. At the heart of this course is a desire for you to

become a practical theologian. I want us to look at the rich depth of heaven in order to better understand the God we know and love. But I don't want it to stop there. I want what we discover to make a practical difference in how we think and act in the world in which we live. Now, finally, we'll seek to develop such an understanding of the doctrines covered in this course that we can share them simply with others.

So to this end, let's consider the reality of a biblical worldview and how a biblical worldview will help us do just that. So to review briefly what we've learned together in Creation Narrative 1, that course that preceded this one, a worldview is the lens by which we interpret all other things in our life. It's a pair of glasses that helps us understand what we're looking at. And everyone, either intentionally or unintentionally, has a worldview that drives their choices in life. Now, we also said that a worldview is not an inherently spiritual concept *per se*. Rather, it's a rational conception about how people relate to the world around them. In order to live a full Christian life, the Christ follower needs to develop a functional Christian or biblical worldview, for as we read the Bible, what we come to discover is that the Bible is telling a grand story, a metanarrative which helps us understand how we are to relate to God and live in the world in which we find ourselves.

So I just used that word metanarrative. Let me unpack that for a moment. A metanarrative is a term used to describe the belief that there is one transcendent, all-encompassing story that exists which helps us explain history, knowledge, and even what we experience. When we accept that the Bible is telling one grand story, that helps us better understand all the smaller stories that it contains. We begin to see that the grand story of the Bible is told in four main chapters. Now, those four chapters are creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. In Creation Narrative 1, we looked at the first two chapters of God's story. In this course, Creation Narrative 2, we will look at the second two chapters of God's story: redemption and consummation. However, at this point, allow me to share a very condensed version of God's story that will help us take a deeper look at the crux of the story in our session today. So here goes.

God created a world, and within this world, he placed man and woman, his vice-regents, to bring about God's will for God's creation. Humanity, however, chose to vandalize the shalom that God had created by violating the command of God. Because of this, humanity incurred the immediate and eternal judgment of God. Yet even though man had broken his relationship with his creator God, God chose to redeem humanity from the eternal judgment of sin through the sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ. So God restored to humanity the opportunity for the relationship with God. Now, as time comes to a close, the last act of God in time will be that of fully restoring his creation to its originally created purposes. One simple succinct story.

Now, you might as well ask, "Why are there only four themes? What purposes do these themes serve?" Well, considering the following when pondering the four main themes of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation will help. First, these four themes help us discover the God of the Bible. They reveal his character, what he does, what he has to say. They also help us discover how to live in relationship with this God. Once we know who God is and how to relate to him properly, we can then also understand how to live in relationship with one another in light of our relationship with God. One may also ask, "Certainly there have to be more than just four themes throughout all the pages of Scripture. What makes these four, and only these four, primary themes?" And this is really a valid question. To answer this, we must first argue that any main theme should be represented throughout the entire Bible,

something which is true about creation, about the fall, redemption, and consummation. Second, we must say that a main theme should significantly advance God's big idea in such a way that without that theme, it really would be impossible to fully understand God's big idea.

Now, if you're paying attention and you haven't checked out because I'm continuing to talk to you, you'll notice that I just introduced another phrase: God's big idea. If the Bible is telling us one story, then it should have one main theme. Like the Lord of the Rings trilogy has many chapters but one theme (get rid of the stinking ring), like the Three Musketeers has many chapters but one theme (all for one and one for all), like any of our favorite books, the Bible, if it's telling us a story, needs to have one main theme. The big idea is just that. It is the main theme of God's story. And the main theme of God's story is Jesus Christ. You see, Jesus Christ alone is the keystone that unites the plan of God and the destiny of man. Now, hopefully you know what keystone is. A keystone is a wedge-shaped stone that is critical to holding together a structure, most often a doorway or an arch. It stands at the center and holds the whole thing in place. Take this keystone away and that doorway or arch comes crashing down. Don't believe me? Google it. So Jesus Christ is the keystone that unites God and his creation together.

Now, as we said above, each of the main chapters or themes of God's story should advance some important aspect of God's big idea. In other words, Jesus should be present in every part of the story if he is indeed God's big idea. So let's do a little test then. Let's see if we can find Jesus in each of the four main themes of God's metanarrative. And let's start with creation. So Jesus is the keystone uniting the plan of God and the destiny of man and that he was God's agent in creation. In John 1:3, we read this: "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Further, he took upon himself a created body that he might engage with humanity at a distinctly new and different way. Again, we looked at the gospel of John 1, but this time, let's take a look at verse 14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." Creation's primary contribution to God's big idea was to clarify God's original purpose for his creation and, further, to identify the special relationship he shared with humanity. So we can see that Jesus is the keystone to helping us understand creation in God's story.

Now, we can also discover Jesus in the fall. Jesus Christ is the keystone uniting the plan of God and the destiny of man in that he who was holy became cursed on our account. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus was holy. It states, "For we do not have a high priest who is cannot sympathize with us in our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet is without sin." Now, we also read in Isaiah 53:6 that "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." The fall's primary contribution to God's big idea is that it helps to identify how God's purpose and man's destiny became separated.

Jesus is also, and somewhat obviously, involved in redemption. Jesus is the keystone uniting the plan of God and the destiny of man in that he is God's chosen sacrifice to secure our redemption. Furthermore, as we will see, Jesus is the prototype of how humanity will, in fact, be redeemed themselves. So we read in Hebrews 10:14, "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." And in 1 Corinthians 15:20, we read this: "In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." Through studying redemption in the Bible, we discover that redemption's primary contribution to God's big idea is to identify why Jesus Christ is the only adequate sacrifice available to reconnect God's purpose in man's destiny.

Finally, we can also discover Jesus in the final chapter of God's story: consummation. Jesus Christ is the keystone uniting the plan of God and the destiny of man in that he is God's agent to judge all that is cursed and God's agent to restore all creation. A pair of passages in the Book of Revelation speak to these two roles. First, Revelation 19:11-16. "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." Certainly a splendid image of the judging Lord.

Yet we also read in Revelation 21:5 this: "He who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' He said this as well, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" So consummation's primary contribution to God's big idea is to reveal how Jesus Christ will reunite God's original purpose and man's destiny. So the Bible is telling us one grand story, and at the heart of that story is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ alone is the keystone that unites the plan of God and the destiny of man. Having a biblical worldview is critical to theology. As we continue through this course, let me challenge you to look deeply into the details and nuance of theology. But as you do, never lose sight of God's big idea. The word of God has been given to humanity that we might reconnect with our God. This can only be done through Jesus Christ. And this truth is at the heart of all good theology.