

BIBLICAL COSMOLOGY

- I. God and the “world”
 - A. God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Omnipotent Sovereign over the entirety of the created world/order.
 - B. Greek word for “world” is *kosmos* (cf. outline on “world”)
 - 1. From root word *komeo* - “to take care of”
 - 2. Originally meant “order” or “arrangement”
 - 3. Later developed meaning of “world”
 - a. Greeks considered physical world to be “ordered” and “arranged”
 - b. This became basis of “cosmological” argument for God’s existence.
 - (1) created world demands a Creator
 - (2) design demands a Designer
 - C. In this study we are using “cosmology” for both created world/order, and more specifically for fallen world/order.

- II. The created world/order
 - A. World/order of physical creation (cf. studies on “creation”)
 - Gen. 1:1 - “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”
 - John 1:10 - “the world was made through Him (Jesus Christ)”
 - Acts 17:24 - “the God who made the world and all things in it”
 - Rom. 1:20 - “since the creation of the world”
 - B. World/order of created humanity (cf. “Man as God Intended”)
 - Gen. 1:27 - “God created man in his own image...male and female...”
 - Gen. 5:1 - “in the day when God created man”
 - 1. Relation of created world of humanity to created physical world in general.
 - Gen. 1:28 - “subdue it...rule over every living thing”
 - Gen. 2:15 - “cultivate and keep it”
 - a. Man is to affirm the physical world as God’s creation
 - b. ...respect, appreciate, protect, tend and work
 - 2. Individual human beings
 - a. spiritual condition
 - Gen. 2:7 - “God breathed into them the breath of lives”
 - b. choosing creatures
 - Gen. 2:9 - “tree of life...tree of knowledge of good and evil”
 - (1) derivative man; faith-creature; choice of receptivity
 - (2) allows for cosmic conflict of good and evil within world/order of humanity
 - 3. Collective world/order of social relationships among humanity
 - a. God-ordained structures of human social existence
 - b. Examples of such:
 - (1) Family - marriage, parenting, extended family
 - (2) Government - legislation, defense, infrastructure
 - (3) Education - instruction, research
 - (4) Economics - medium of exchange
 - (5) Community of faith - belonging, acceptance, love
 - c. Purposes of such:
 - (1) forms, instruments, framework, undergirding of social function, to regulate human existence in society
 - (2) provide stability, structure, cohesion, order

- (3) to serve, preserve, enhance human social life for man's good
 - d. Man and his social relations are always spiritually energized, activated and generated.
 - (1) spiritual activation of God or Satan
 - (2) invested with spiritual character of good or evil
- C. The entire created world/order
 - 1. ...is created by God
 - a. "not made with human hands" (Acts 17:25)
 - b. not sustained or controlled by human enterprise
 - 2. ...is accountable to God
 - a. dependency, contingency
 - b. receptivity, availability - faith of man
 - 3. ...is not autonomous from God
 - 4. ...is not evil in itself
 - a. physical creation is not intrinsically evil
 - b. humanity is not intrinsically evil
 - c. social structures are not intrinsically evil

Col. 1:16 - "by Him all things were created, in heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created by and for Him"

III. The fallen world/order

- A. The choice of self-oriented action by Adam enacted the Fall of man and the created world/order into evil.
 - 1. Humanity fell into sin
 - Rom. 5:19 - "through one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners"
 - I Cor. 15:22 - "in Adam all die"
 - 2. Entire created physical world/order affected
 - Rom. 8:20 - "creation was subjected to futility"
- B. The created world/order was now susceptible to, and succumbed to, the spiritual energizing of the Evil One.
 - 1. Satan, the Devil (cf. outline on "Satan")
 - a. identified as:
 - (1). "god of this world" - II Cor. 4:4
 - (2). "ruler of this world" - Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11
 - (3). "prince of power of air" - Eph. 2:2
 - (4). "tempter" - Matt. 4:3; I Thess. 3:5
 - b. character of
 - (1). antithesis, opposition, misrepresentation
 - (2). deceiver, liar - Jn. 8:44; II Cor. 11:14
 - (3). destroyer, disintegration, degeneration - I Cor. 10:10
 - (4). death - Jn. 8:44; Heb. 2:14
 - 2. Demons (cf. outline on "Demons")
 - a. evil spirits - Matt. 8:28; Mk. 1:23; Lk. 8:27
 - b. effects on individuals: disfigure, contort, distort, derange, convulsions, destructive
 - c. effects on social structures: domination, exploitation, oppression, dehumanization, intimidation, etc.
- C. Diabolic perversion/distortion of the God-ordained functional behavior of individual mankind.
 - 1. Spiritual condition

- a. “without God...separate from Christ” - Eph. 2:12
 - b. “natural man” - I Cor. 2:14; Jude 19
 - c. “sinner” - Rom. 5:8,19; I Tim. 1:15
 - d. “energized by devil” - Eph. 2:2
 - e. “child of devil” - I Jn. 3:10
2. Behavioral expression
- a. “sinful behavior” - I Jn. 3:8
 - b. “worldly” - Titus 2:12; Jude 1:19
 - c. “flesh” patterns (cf. outline on “Flesh;” studies on “S.E.L.F.”)
Gal. 5:16,17, 19-21; Rom. 8:12; 13:14
- D. Diabolic perversion/distortion of the God-ordained functional structures of human social existence
1. Social structures and institutions permeated by evil character as fallen men function therein.
Eph. 6:12 - “our struggle is against the rulers, the powers, the world-forces of darkness, the spiritual forces of wickedness”
I Jn. 5:19 - “the whole world lies in the Evil One”
I Cor. 2:6,8 - “rulers of this age...crucified the Lord of glory”
Rom. 8:38 - “principalities (that would seek) to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”
Col. 1:13 - “domain of darkness”
2. Various forms of such perverted, adverse, demonic powers
- a. Family - disintegration, dysfunction, abuse, violence, abandonment, adultery, divorce
 - b. Government - totalitarianism, absolute authority, bureaucracies, legislation, militarism, nationalism, patriotism, “new society,” politics
 - c. Education - ideological indoctrination, values clarification, environmentalism, techniques, science
 - d. Economics - mercantile mechanism, the “Almighty Dollar,” productivity, utilitarianism, corporate structures, materialistic consumption, industrialization, technology, electronic networking
 - e. Religion - traditions, ideologies, moralities, doctrines, ecclesiastical hierarchy, theocratic claims
 - f. communications, entertainment, sports, public opinion, psychology, sociological theories, medicine, social action programs, ethnicity, race, class, sexism, astrology
3. Various evil activities of these corrupt social structures
- a. domination, coercion, demanding, tyranny, enslavement (cf. Gal. 4:3), manipulation, intimidation, terrorism, violence
 - b. propaganda, falsehood, misinformation, exploitation, sophistry, demagoguery, harassment, secrecy, threats, seduction, conformity, oppression, double-talk, demoralizing, dehumanizing
 - c. demand allegiance, loyalty, trust, obedience, to be regarded as ultimate value systems, integrating principles of life, the absolute authority
4. Idolatrous preoccupation with fallen social structures
Rom. 1:25 - “worship the creature rather than the Creator”
Gal. 4:8 - “slaves to those which by nature are no gods”
- a. substitute secular gods. People put their faith in the structures and their activities, rather than in God.
 - b. they seek to separate people from God - Rom. 8:38

- c. set themselves up as pseudo-saviors of secular salvation.
 - (1). to solve man's problems
 - (2). to make man happy
- 5. Results of such diabolic activity in the social structures of humanity
 - a. striving, "works," performance, activism
 - b. instability, frustration, inability to understand, "What in the world is going on?"
 - c. despair, nihilism, absurdism, cynicism, adrift, helplessness, hopelessness

IV. The Victory of Jesus Christ over the "world"

- A. Jesus confronted the world-powers of evil
 - 1. rejected worldly rule and power in temptation - Matt. 4:1-11
 - 2. indicated this was His Messianic mission - Lk. 7:20-23
 - 3. cast out demons - Mk. 1:23-28; Lk. 9:37-43
 - 4. chastised faith in Mammon (Lk. 13:32,33) and riches (Mk. 10:25; Lk. 16:19)
 - 5. challenged illicit monopolies of trade - Mk. 11:17
 - 6. subordinated the Law and Moses to Himself - Matt. 5:21-48
 - 7. challenged governmental authority - Lk. 13:32; Jn. 19:10,11
 - 8. exposed diabolic source of religion - Jn. 8:44
 - 9. evidenced servanthood instead of domination - Lk. 22:25-27; Mk. 10:42-45; Jn. 13:4-20
 - 10. advocated non-violence - Matt. 5:38-48; 26:52,53
 - 11. willingness to sacrifice and suffer - Matt. 20:28; Lk. 9:22; 17:25; 24:26
- B. In the decisive, historical act of crucifixion Jesus defeated the world-powers
 - 1. Lived out denial of power-struggle in apparent powerlessness
 - a. emptied Himself, obedience - Phil 2:6-8
 - b. voluntarily submitted unto death - Jn 10:15-18
 - 2. Diabolic power worked through Roman government and Jewish religion
 - a. gathered against Jesus - Acts 4:27,28
 - b. unaware of the effect it would have - I Cor. 2:8
 - 3. By His death and resurrection Jesus accomplished God's intent
 - a. "accomplished the work Thou gave Me to do" - Jn. 17:4
 - b. "It is finished" - Jn. 19:30
 - 4. Diabolic world-powers defeated
 - a. "ruler of this world has been judged" - Jn. 16:11
 - b. "strong man bound," limited - Matt. 12:22-29; Rev. 20:2
 - c. "ruler of this world shall be cast out" - Jn. 12:31
 - d. "I have overcome the world" - Jn. 16:33
 - e. "disarmed the rulers and authorities, made public display of them, having triumphed over them" - Col. 2:15
 - f. "rule, authority, power and dominion...all things in subjection under His feet" - Eph. 1:21,22
 - g. Satan still active (I Pet. 5:8), but his destiny of doom is determined and set in motion
- C. Kingdom of God in Christ established in contradistinction to world
 - 1. totally contrary to the world/powers in its ways of operation
 - a. "My kingdom is not of this world" - Jn. 18:36
 - b. "The Kingdom of God is...righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" - Rom. 14:17
 - 2. stands in opposition to the world-powers
 - a. "our struggle is against the rulers, powers, world forces of

- darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness” - Eph. 6:12
- b. “in this world you will have tribulation” - Jn. 16:33
3. the kingdom functions by the reign of Jesus as Lord in receptive individuals and their collective social and interpersonal relations
- a. kingdom is not a realm or tangible entity
- b. kingdom is not synonymous with organizational, institutional ecclesiasticism (church)
- c. kingdom is the ontological dynamic of the risen Lord Jesus reigning in life - Rom. 5:17,21
- (1) having effected in receptive individuals the spiritual exchange of spiritual regeneration
Acts 26:18 - “from the dominion of Satan to God”
Eph. 2:2,5,8 - “formerly according to prince of power of air...made alive with Christ”
Jn. 3:3-7 - “born again...enter into kingdom of God”
- (2) Christocentric indwelling of the Spirit of Christ
Rom. 8:9 - “if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”
Col. 1:27 - “Christ in you, the hope of glory”
Gal. 2:20 - “Christ lives in me”
II Cor. 13:5 - “Christ is in you...”
- (3) reigning as Head of His Body, the *ecclesia*, Church
- (a) Though the church is not synonymous with the kingdom, it serves to proclaim the defeat of the evil world-powers, and to introduce men to the kingdom-reign of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.
Eph. 3:10 - “the manifold wisdom of God made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places”
- (b) The church witnesses to the kingdom as it visibly expresses the antithesis of the evil-powers by evidencing the character of God in loving one another”
Jn. 13:35 - “men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another”
4. Eschatological perspective of Christ’s victory and the kingdom
- a. God’s action in Christ is the “last” and ultimate act for man
Acts 2:17 - “the last days”
I Cor. 15:45 - “the last Adam” (Christ)
I Peter 1:20 - “last times”
- b. Christ’s victorious kingdom is both...
- (1) Already
Lk. 11:20 - “if I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you”
Lk. 17:21 - “the kingdom of God is in your midst”
Col. 1:13 - “transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”
- (2) Not yet
I Cor. 15:24,25,28 - “the end, when Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, when He has abolished all rule and authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under

His feet...when all things are subjected to Him”

- (3) In the meantime we live in the “enigma of the interim” believing that the victory has been accomplished and will be consummated.

D. Christians in the world today

1. Must understand their position “in Christ”
 - a. radical difference as children of God - I Jn. 3:10
 - b. “delivered from domain of darkness” - Col. 1:13
 - c. “no longer slaves of sin” - Rom. 6:16-18
 - d. free and liberated in Christ - Gal. 5:1,13
 - e. “citizenship is in heaven” - Phil. 3:20
2. Must understand their relation to the world-powers of evil
 - a. “overcomers” of the world - I Jn. 5:14,15
 - b. “in the world...but not of the world” - Jn. 17:11,14
 - c. “strangers and aliens in the world” - I Pet. 1:1; 2:11
 - d. “sent into the world” - Jn. 17:18
 - e. salt and light unto the world - Matt. 5:13,14
3. Must recognize the sufficiency of the divine dynamic of the indwelling Spirit of Christ.
 - a. spiritual discernment to see-through, re-evaluate, relativize, challenge, question, expose and resist the world powers of evil - I Cor. 2:11-16
 - b. strength to stand firm against the powers - Eph. 6:11,13,14
 - c. revolutionary action to “set the world on fire” - Lk. 12:49-53
 - d. act in the power of the Holy Spirit
 - (1) “All authority in Christ” - Matt. 28:20
 - (2) “Son of God with power by resurrection” - Rom. 1:4
 - (3) “greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world” - I Jn. 4:4
 - (4) gospel dynamic of divine power - Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18; 2:4
 - e. external appearances to the contrary, we act in His power
 - (1) powerlessness - I Cor. 1:26
 - (2) weakness - II Cor. 12:9,10
 - f. we do not employ the power-plays/struggles of the world’s ways

E. Christian expectation/hope of ultimate restoration of the function of entire created world/order under Christ.

1. Consummation of Christ’s victory over world-powers of evil

Eph. 1:10 - “a view to an administration...the summing up of all things in Christ, things in heavens and things upon the earth”

I Cor. 15:24,25 - “the end,...when He has abolished all rule and authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death”

Rom. 8:18-22 - “the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God...the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption”
2. Satan and demonic order not restored, but cast out
 - a. They are fixed in evil, and cannot be transformed
 - b. They will bow to Christ - Phil. 2:11
 - c. Their destined end is determined - Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10