

## OVERVIEW

The biblical message is different from all the messages of the world because only the Bible is the revelation of God. Its unique message may be summarized in three words: *creation, fall, and redemption.*

- In the beginning God created the world and male and female as “very good” (Genesis 1:31).
- The first man sinned against God, bringing death to himself, sin and death to his posterity, and corruption to the creation (Genesis 3:14-19).
- But God promised to redeem man from sin and death through the offspring of the woman (Genesis 3:15). This offspring was the virgin-born Son of God, Jesus Christ, who overcame the consequences of the Fall in His cross and resurrection. Through Him even the corruption of the creation will one day be overcome (Romans 8: 20-21).

Christians believe this revealed message. Non-Christians, liberal Christians, and sect group versions of Christianity do not believe it.

While biblical Christians believe this message, not all of them grasp how it makes a difference . . .

### COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Presbyterian Church in America*

281 Edgewood Road  
P.O. Box 8953  
Asheville, NC 28804  
(828) 253-6578  
fax (828) 253-6579

Robert R. Drake  
*Pastor*



# THE BIBLICAL DIFFERENCE

Robert R. Drake

## **CREATION, FALL, AND REDEMPTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR SELF- UNDERSTANDING**

(1) Since the three-point biblical message described how the believer exists, it is the basis for his self understanding.

He understands himself as the creature of God made in the image of God to reflect the glory of God so that he has great dignity as a human being.

But at the same time, he understands himself as a sinner against God and against his own human dignity as the image of God.

Again, at the same time, he understands himself as redeemed in Christ to glorify God as an image bearer should.

He is all three at once: redeemed, fallen, creature.

(2) Non-Christians derive their self-understanding from only two points instead of three because they have a different view of human existence.

They believe man has always had a built-in problem. They merge “creation” and “fall” into one point and claim man was originally made defective either by the gods or by the process of evolution. For example, if man evolved from beasts, then there never was a time when man was without the problem of the beast within him, and there never was a time when he was not subject to death.

The built-in problem is not so great, however, that man cannot improve himself by works through some form of education. This is the non-Christian’s version of “redemption.”

## **A DIFFERENCE IN THEOLOGY**

Creation, fall, and redemption unite the Bible around one message of God’s grace to sinners. If the fall into sin brought death, then only the resurrection from the dead can overcome the Fall. No form of man’s law-keeping can merit this resurrection because death is all that sinful man can merit. Resurrection life must be a free gift of God through the power of the Holy Spirit for all those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23).

Old Testament Law must be seen as an anticipation of the coming offspring of the woman. It demonstrated the need for His promised coming to redeem. To say that Old Testament saints were “saved” by obedience to the law and not by faith in the promise is to ignore the fall into sin just as the Pharisees did.

## **A DIFFERENCE IN EVANGELISM**

To help people face their accountability to their Creator and their need for redemption by grace, we may ask them, “Do you expect to die? If so, why?” The world will answer that death is only natural and part of man’s built-in problem. We may preach that “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

## **A DIFFERENCE IN RELIGION**

Many people in our society think religion (the service they render to God) is limited to one part of their lives. But for those who believe that the world is God’s, that the consequences of sin are as broad as that world, and that the redeemed life in Christ is as broad as the Fall, then all of life becomes “religion.” It flows from their self-understanding. Nothing man can think about or do is outside the creation, sin, and the need to glorify God.

This view of religion is the biblical view of the kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 6:10). It may be summarized as “God is the Creator King over all things, and I am His redeemed servant in all things.” To limit religion or the kingdom of God to just one area of life (such as the spiritual or ethical) is to neglect the basic biblical message which leaves no room for religious neutrality.

## **A DIFFERENCE IN WORSHIP**

We worship God who is the Creator, the righteous and holy Judge of sin, and the loving Redeemer. We who worship are *redeemed, fallen, creatures*, so our worship will reflect our self-understanding. It will include both confession of sin and the joy of salvation. Our worship will also reflect the unity of God’s people in both Testaments as saved by grace, so Psalms will be included (Colossians 3:16). And worship will reflect the breadth of the kingdom of God as application of the Word of God addresses every area of life and thought.

## **A DIFFERENCE IN COUNSELING**

Problem-solving will be addressed from our identity as *redeemed, fallen, creatures*. Without this threefold theme, we do not locate the source of problems in the consequences of the Fall nor do we see the goal as glorifying God. Instead of God’s glory, we inquire first about our own peace and happiness. We secretly believe that our religion and the glory of God are but part of our lives and that we need something else in the fallen creation to make us happy or give us peace. The task of counseling is to make us see that “to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21). Everything in the fallen creation will pass away through sin and death. Only Christ who is not part of the fallen creation will endure.

## **A DIFFERENCE IN EDUCATION**

We understand that the world is governed by the Creator who uses two kinds of governing principles: laws which cannot be broken by man and laws which can be broken (cf. Genesis 8:22; 9:6). By the first kind of laws, God rules and maintains the order of the natural creation. These laws yield sciences such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. In these areas, Christians and non-Christians may have much in common in their theory formations (except for discussions of origins) because the laws cannot be rejected by sinners. In these areas the consequences of the Fall are limited to the corruption and vanity of the creation (Romans 8:20).

By the second kind of laws, God gives directions for all of man’s life, including his use of the creation (cf. the book of Proverbs). When man forms theories about his life as in history, psychology, sociology, economics, politics, and the arts, his self-understanding comes to the surface. Either he is the image bearer of his Creator who has given him directives on how to live, or he is not the image bearer and so rejects God’s directives. This is why we see increasing differences between Christians and non-Christians in these areas. We get closer to the effects of the Fall within the human heart.