

“WE ARE IN THE BIG PICTURE”

1) CREATION

- a) Peace between man and God
- b) Peace between man and nature
- c) Peace between man and women

2) FALL and REDEMPTION

- a) Peace destroyed
- b) Chaos in relationships
- c) Promise of Redemption in Christ
 - i) Acceptance of promise establishes peace with God
 - ii) Acceptance of promise enables peace among those in Christ
- d) Suffering is part of the story

3) NEW CREATION

- a) All things new
- b) Peace reigns in all relationships
- c) Suffering ended

WE ARE IN THE BIG PICTURE:

Creation (the start); Fall and Redemption (the present); and, New Creation (the promised future)

Most Christians have a smorgasbord theology—based on the study of specific biblical passages in sermons, Sunday School classes, and Bible studies—which answers certain questions and focuses on individuals and their needs. Most Christians talk about personal salvation and what God has done for them in their lives. They have a theology of worship and fellowship, of health and prosperity, and of care for the needy. But they have little in their thinking for a world full of diverse peoples, of an earth caught up in the evils of sin, of a history from before Creation to eternity or of the reason for their existence in such a world.

In seminaries, too, this fragmentation and specialization has taken its toll. Great care is given to the detailed study of one biblical passage or another, of one biblical hero or another, and of what the Gospel means to us in our lives today. We have a doctrine of God, of sin and personal salvation, and of divine healing and provision. We have a fragmented story—of Jesus, Ruth, David, Mary and Peter. No longer do we see ourselves as part of a movement far greater than ourselves and a universal history that gives meaning to our lives because it shows us our place in a cosmic story.

...All of Scripture points to the fact that God is a missionary God,¹ that the church is to be a missionary community, and that God's people are to be missionary people..¹

The Bible obviously covers a great deal of ground. But there is one supreme subject that binds it all together: Jesus Christ and the salvation God offers through him. That is true not just of the New Testament but of the Old as well. Jesus, speaking of the Old Testament, said, 'these are the Scriptures that testify about me' (John 5:39). After he had risen from the dead he met two believers on the road to Emmaus and led them in a Bible study. What a privilege for them! 'Beginning with Moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself' (Luke 24:27). A short time later he met with his disciples and said, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms' (Luke 24:44).

Many Christians have an idea that God decided to send Jesus to earth only after his first plan had failed; his original idea (Plan A) was to give people an opportunity to become his people by obeying his law. But they failed, so he scratched his head and came up with another idea (Plan B): to save people by grace through the death of Jesus. Nothing could be further from the truth. God had always planned to send Jesus. The whole Bible points to him from beginning to end. In the Old Testament God points forward to him and promises his coming in the future. In the New Testament God proclaims him to be the one who fulfills all those promises.²

¹Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing The Kingdom*, pp. 7,8

²Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, pp. 16,17