

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23. ¹

1. **Mike Bradley Proclaims the First Reading, NAB.** All write down words, phrases, images which “resonate.”

2. Echo Back a Response

Participants share words and images which struck the heart and mind and imagination as they listened. There is **no discussion, no questions** except for clarification.

3. Echo The Tradition (Fr. Pat’s Presentation)

Liturgical Context

The OT readings of Lent give us highlights of Israel’s salvation history.²

First Sunday	The Covenant with Noah
Second Sunday	The Test of Abraham
Third Sunday	The Ten Commandments
Fourth Sunday	The Babylonian Exile & Return

The Chronicler’s History

Consists of the following biblical books: 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah

The main part of 1-2 Chronicles was written shortly after the Temple was rebuilt in 516 B.C.³

Used the Deuteronomistic History as a Source.⁴

BUT: The Chronicler has a different perspective. The DH presumes that **kings** rule Israel.

The Chronicler’s History is written at a time when **priests** were the rulers of Israel.

The Chronicler is going to stress the Temple cult and “things priestly.”

There is no longer any real flesh-and-blood king to challenge priestly authority.

He can afford to idealize a great king of the past. King David is held up as an “ideal saint.”

E.g., the Chronicler never mentions David’s adultery with Bathsheba or his murder of Uriah the Hittite.

The Chronicler gives David much more responsibility for the building of the Temple than does the DH.

The Post-Exilic Community

It was a relatively small group that returned from Babylon.

Many Jews had put down “roots” in Babylon, and were living quite well there.

Compare the modern state of Israel. Most of the first settlers did not come from Jews living well in American cities.

Those returning entered a city that had been utterly destroyed. They were “starting from scratch.”

From the perspective of the Chronicler, one of the main dangers was **assimilation** to the surrounding pagans.

The Chronicler stressed the need to preserve Jewish identity, to keep separate for foreigners.

The focus of Jewish identity was to be the worship conducted by priests in the rebuilt Jerusalem Temple.

Overview of the Hebrew Bible

Jews call their Bible the *Tanakh* < *Torah* (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), *Ketuvim* (Writings)

¹ My main resources are: Reginald H. Fuller, *Preaching the Lectionary: The Word of God for the Church Today* (Liturgical Press, 1984); Dianne Bergant, with Richard Fragomeni, *Preaching the New Lectionary: Year B* (Liturgical Press, 1999).

² Fuller, *Preaching the Lectionary*, 240.

³ Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Paulist, 1984 & 2012) 452, 395 in the second edition.

⁴ As a reminder, the Deuteronomistic History includes: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings. Some scholars think that the Book of Deuteronomy served as the “preface” for this history. “Deuteronomistic theology” maintains that God rewards fidelity to the covenant and punishes infidelity.

1) Law

2) Prophets⁵

3) Writings

It is arranged differently from our Christian Old Testaments

1) Books of Moses

2) Historical Books

3) Wisdom Books

4) Prophetic Books

Jews view the *Torah* as the most sacred part of the *Tanakh*; the prophets follow it as **commentary** on the *Torah*.

Christians, by contrast, see the Prophetic books come at the end of the Christian OT.

Christians regard the Prophets as **pointing forward** toward the NT.

If you ever want to know the “Jewish take” on a particular OT passage, I recommend [The Jewish Study Bible](#).⁶
2 Chronicles is the last book of the Hebrew Bible.

Original Ending of the Hebrew Bible: 2 Chronicles 36:20-21

He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years. (RSV)

This was a somber ending to the scriptures; the Temple destroyed, the land laid waste, awaiting the end of punishment.

Addition of Ezra 1:1-3a

The first verses of Ezra = 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, almost word-for-word.

This prevents the *Tanakh* from ending on a sad note.

The main difference is that 2 Chronicles 36:23 reads, “And may **the LORD** his God be with him.”

The original in Ezra reads simply “And may his God be with him.”

The Persian view was that it was good policy to cultivate the “local gods” in all parts of their Empire.⁷

There are similar decrees by Cyrus for others whom the Babylonians had conquered.

The Persian bureaucracy might have even had a “form” locals could copy, inserting the name of their own god.

From the view of the sacred author, the LORD, the only true God, was making use of pagans to achieve his will.

This is in accord with the teaching of Second Isaiah.⁸

Isaiah 45:1-3

Thus says the LORD to his anointed [=Messiah], to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and ungird the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:

² “I will go before you and level the mountains,

I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut asunder the bars of iron,

³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name (RSV).

The pagan King Cyrus is the only person an OT prophet calls “messiah” by name.

Cyrus, Astute Politician, 2 Chron. 36:23

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, “**The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.** (RSV)

Cyrus seems to be a believer in the LORD. He claims the LORD made him ruler of “all the kingdoms of the earth.”

⁵ Many Christians are surprised to find out that Daniel is not considered a “prophet” by Jews. His book is included in the last section of their Bible, the Writings.

⁶ *The Jewish Study Bible: Featuring The Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford University Press, 2004), ISBN 978-0-19-529751-5.

⁷ Boadt, *Old Testament*, 435.

⁸ Scholars agree that “Isaiah of Jerusalem” wrote most of Isaiah 1-39 in the 8th century (700s) B.C. During the Babylonian Exile (586-539 B.C.) an anonymous prophet scholars call “Second Isaiah” wrote chapters 40-55. **Most scholars regard Second Isaiah as the first monotheist**, the first person to teach that there is only one God. Chapters 56-66 of Isaiah were written shortly after the Exile by another anonymous prophet called “Third Isaiah.” See Boadt, *Old Testament*, 324-333, 416-430, 443-445 (pages refer to the first edition).

However, elsewhere he gives credit to Marduk

Marduk . . . turned back. His anger (abated) and he had mercy. He . . . looked through all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead (Marduk) in the annual procession. Then he pronounced the name of Cyrus, king of Anshan; **declared him to be the ruler of all the world.**⁹

Cyrus **respects** the rights of the Jews (and others) to worship their local gods.
He does not accept Jewish claims that the LORD is the only true God.

What is in verses 17 & 18? [No need to include in the lecture. Leave here for informational purposes.]

. . . till there was no remedy. ¹⁷ Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged; he gave them all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. ¹⁹ And they burned the house of God, . . . (RSV)

4. Echo the Tradition Again: Questions, Comments, Observations

5. Pat Davis Proclaims the First Reading from the NABRE

6. Participants Name the Good News: for the original listeners; for the present-day hearer.

7. Name the Challenge.

Participants share the challenges of the text for the first hearers.
How does the text challenge the experience and understanding of the *present day* listener?
What is the *pain* and *bondage* and *brokenness* in the human situation touched by this text?

Psalm 137:1-6

Response: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you.

1. Mike Bradley Proclaims the Psalm, NAB translation.

All write down words, phrases, images which “resonate.”

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The Disaster of the Exile

It is hard for us to imagine the shock of the Exile.

There was only one place where the God of Israel was “really present” -- the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Babylonians had destroyed it, burning it to the ground.

Many people concluded that Marduk, god of Babylon, was stronger than YHWH, God of Israel.

Others, however, remembered that Jeremiah had prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed.

At the time, most people considered Jeremiah a blasphemer.

Most people thought he was “unpatriotic” because he urged surrender to Babylon.

He claimed that the LORD had sent the Babylonian army to punish his people for their sins.

And these people began to wonder, “What if Jeremiah had been right?”

If they were being punished for their sins, if they repented, perhaps the LORD would take them back.

Perhaps there was still hope, because the LORD is merciful.

⁹ The quote is from *ANET (Ancient Near Eastern Texts)*, a standard resource for OT scholars. It is quote by Boadt, *OT*, p. 416.

Historical Situation of the Psalmist

“The psalm seems to be the voice of exiles who have returned to live in the ruins of a Jerusalem not yet rebuilt.”¹⁰

What Is Omitted? (verses 7-9)

⁷ Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem's fall,
how they said, "Tear it down! Tear it down! Down to its foundations!"

⁸ O daughter Babylon, you devastator!

Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us!

⁹ Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock! (NRSV)

These also are the “inspired Word of God.”

When most people think what “inspiration” means, they think of their favorite Bible passages.

The Lord is my shepherd.

I am the living bread come down from heaven.

Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.¹¹

Any “doctrine of inspiration” must be broad enough to include verses such as these.

And there is more.

Romano Guardini, “The Darkness in the Human Heart”

The Scripture does not say, “What the person (*der Mensch*) writes there is good.” Rather, it says, “That’s the way people (*der Mensch*) are, that they say such things.” If then the hearer protests, then the Scripture answers, “Yes indeed! You too are like that!” The same thing is found in you as in the poet who wrote the psalm! The same thing mixed that is mixed with zeal for God! -- of course taking into account different historical circumstances and life experiences. And with you too, there comes the occasion, that this humanity breaks out.¹²

Being a Christian does not exempt one from being human.

Guardini reflects on Paul’s observations on this experience.

To stand in Salvation, to cling to Christ, means that within the “old” person the start of a “new” person has begun. But the old person is still there, with all of his drives and inclinations, good as well as bad. Two points of focus now exist; two persons struggle with each other. Often the new person is defeated, or at least covered up, proven a liar, so that one can scarcely be aware of his existence. Only slowly does what is New press forward, become stronger; and only by passing through all sorts of backsliding does the new person grow¹³

A Lesson from History

Guardini points out that God has always called sinful people.

Jacob cheated his brother out of his birthright; Jacob lied to his own father Isaac, who was on his deathbed.

King David, whom God himself calls “my servant David,” was an adulterer and a murderer.

This is not an excuse for those who follow God to give in to evil.

It surely means that one should not have a rigid, moralistic view of the person of faith. Rather, to see such a person for whom he is: a living person -- and that no one “**is**” Christian; rather one “**becomes**” Christian.¹⁴

Guardini suggests that this is a life-long process.

¹⁰ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (John Knox Press, 1994), 421. The Interpretation Commentary series is directed toward pastors, seminarians, and lay students preparing for ministry in the Church. Unlike commentaries written for professional scholars, this series presumes no knowledge of biblical languages.

¹¹ John 17:3, my personal favorite.

¹² Romano Guardini, *Weisheit der Psalmen: Meditationen* (Werkbund-Verlag, Würzburg, 1953) p. 142, my translation.

¹³ Ibid., 142-143.

¹⁴ Ibid., 144.

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6. Participants Name the Good News: for the original listeners; for the present-day hearer.

7. **Name the Challenge.** Participants share the challenges of the text for the first hearers. How does the text challenge the experience and understanding of the *present day* listener? What is the *pain* and *bondage* and *brokenness* in the human situation touched by this text?

Ephesians 2:4-10

1. **James Owen Proclaims the Second Reading, NAB.** All write down words, phrases, images which “resonate.”

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Biblical Context

The majority of scholars (about 80%) think Ephesians was written by one of Paul’s disciples.¹⁵ Brown argues that “Ephesus” was not in the original manuscript of the letter.¹⁶

We are not sure to whom it was originally addressed.

After Romans, Ephesians is probably the most famous of the Pauline Epistles.

Ephesians is very similar to Colossians.

Scholars debate if there is Colossians directly influenced Ephesians, or whether both drew from common sources.

Personal Remark: I have given detailed lectures on all of the “undisputed” Pauline Epistles¹⁷, as well as the Pastorals.¹⁸

This reading makes me want to lecture on: 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians. Maybe next year.

Verses 1-7 Are One Sentence in Greek

Our reading includes verses 4-10. That is, it begins in the middle of a sentence.

Briefly, the author starts a thought, and then “gets lost” in an aside.¹⁹

The lectionary solves the problem by picking up the sentence where he comes back to his main point.

“You” and “We”

In undisputed Pauline Epistles the contrast is between “You Gentile Christians” and “We Jewish Christians.”

Paul considers himself a Jewish member of the Jesus Movement.

Some interpret the contrast the same way in Ephesians.

Others think of “you” as the Ephesians in contrast to “Paul” and his missionary associates.

¹⁵ Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Doubleday, 1997) 620-621.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 626.

¹⁷ The seven undisputed epistles are: Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

¹⁸ The three “Pastoral Epistles” are 1-2 Timothy and Titus. About 90% of NT scholars think these letters are post-Pauline.

¹⁹ The sentence suffers from anacoluthon -- a big word meaning a grammatical structure is missing. I Googled “anacoluthon,” and found this concrete example online: *While in the garden, the door banged shut.* In my humble opinion the biblical sentence is just as poorly written as the above English sentence. **Note on inspiration:** God does not always choose highly educated people to inspire. And divine inspiration does not “make up” for their lack of education. **Personal note:** because I am obsessive, I have spent hours trying to “figure out” this sentence. I might devote an appendix to it.

Others think of “you” as the Ephesians in contrast to “all the other Christians of the world.”

Strongly Sectarian

Margaret MacDonald sees the “Ephesian” community as strongly sectarian. Members of a “sect” see themselves as a small, isolated group, in the midst of a hostile world. They alone see the truth; they are surrounded by people who are immersed in falsehood and lies. They are trying to do good, but they are surrounded by evil. [More on this shortly.]

Before and After || Then and Now

There is a strong contrast between “before” and “after.”
 “Then” refers to the pre-Christian life, full of sin, enslaved to evil.
 “Now” refers to life in Christ, a life freed from slavery to sin -- a life which is dedicated to good works.

Grace and Works

In the undisputed Pauline epistles, the contrast is between “grace” and “works of the Law [of Moses].” In Ephesians the contrast is less specific: between “grace” and “good works” in general. But Ephesians maintains the Pauline emphasis on grace -- God’s free gift to us -- it is not something earned. Ephesians even sees these good works as predestined, “prepared in advance” for us by God. Good works, thus, are not something we do to earn God’s love. Rather they are the result of the change that God has (freely) made in our lives.

Death-Resurrection Imagery

In undisputed Pauline letters, resurrection imagery is always **future**. E.g., Rom 6:8
 But if we **have** died with Christ, we believe that we **shall also live** with him (RSV).
 This is **future** eschatology.
 In Colossians 2:12, Christians experience both death and resurrection in Baptism.
 . . . you were buried with him in baptism, in which you **were also raised** with him through faith . . . (RSV)
 This is **realized** eschatology.
 Our passage from Ephesians takes this even further. Christians are already heaven!
 God . . .⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and **raised us up** with him, and **made us sit with him in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus, (RSV)
 This is **strongly realized** eschatology.

Powers in the Air

In ancient cosmology the “air” is the lower part of “heaven.” In NT cosmology, this part of the world is controlled by evil spirits. Verse 2 refers to the “prince of the power of the air” (RSV). That would be Satan. A similar thought is found in John (12:31; 14:30; 16:1) which refers to him as the “ruler of this world” (RSV).

We Have Been Seated in Heavenly Places

The strongly sectarian elements of Ephesians probably indicate they feel threatened by the surrounding culture. From their perspective, the world is going to hell in a handbasket. The purpose of this statement is to assure the readers that **we are not subject to the “prince of the power of the air.”** Because we are incorporated into the Body of Christ [more below] and because Christ is already enthroned in heaven we -- in Christ -- are cosmologically “higher” than these spiritual enemies.

Liturgical Experience

Many scholars have recognized baptismal imagery in Ephesians. Margaret McDonald sees the experiential basis for this claim to be the liturgical experience of the Ephesians.

She hypothesizes that this experience might have included visionary experiences.

Body of Christ

This familiar Pauline image (see 1 Corinthians 12) is used in a very different sense.

In 1 Corinthians the Church is the body of Christ, and **no part is more important than any other part.**

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you" (1 Cor 12:21).

By contrast, in Ephesians, the Church is the Body of Christ -- **from the neck down!**

Christ is the "head of the body" (5:23).

In Ephesians one part of the body is **much more important** than the rest!²⁰

Understanding of Church

In the undisputed Pauline letters, the word "church" always refers to a **particular assembly** of Christians.

It never refers to a "world-wide" organization.

Brown points out that **all 9** of the uses of Church in Ephesians refer to the **universal** Church.²¹

This "high ecclesiology" is characteristic of the Roman Catholic view of the Church.

Near the beginning of the 20th century Protestant theology coined the term "early Catholicism" for such a view.

If you are reading a Protestant author, "early Catholicism" is not a complementary phrase!

For them, it is a sign that the Church is falling away from its initial purity.

Brown points out that both "low" and "high" ecclesiologies are found in the NT.

Catholics and Protestants are good for each other!²²

The Problem with Sectarianism & "High" Ecclesiology

. . . Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that he might present the church to himself in splendor, **without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.** (Eph. 5:25-27 RSV)

There is a strong temptation to think that **the goal** has already been achieved.

There is a temptation to idealize ones own institution -- to ignore its weaknesses.

There is a tendency to see only good "inside" our group, and only evil "outside" our group.

I will close with repeating one of the warnings of Romano Guardini.

In spite of his Italian-sounding name, Guardini was German.

He lived through the Nazi era. He saw the evil that had been perpetrated by people who were baptized Christians.

To stand in Salvation, to cling to Christ, means that within the "old" person the start of a "new" person has begun. **But the old person is still there**, with all of his drives and inclinations, good as well as bad. Two points of focus now exist; two persons struggle with each other. **Often the new person is defeated**, or at least covered up, proven a liar, so that one can scarcely be aware of his existence. **Only slowly** does what is New press forward, become stronger; and only by passing through all sorts of backsliding does the new person grow²³

That is why he prefers not to say that he "is" Christian, but only that he is "becoming" Christian.

A healthy does of **future** eschatology!

4. Echo the Tradition Again: Questions, Comments, Observations

5. Margie Caplis Proclaims the Second Reading from the Jerusalem Bible

²⁰ One of the reasons most scholars do not think Paul wrote this letter.

²¹ Ibid., 625. The citations are Eph 1:22; 3:10,21; 5:23,24,25, 27,29,32.

²² Ibid. 626

²³ Ibid., 142-143.

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John 3:14-21

1. Jan Pou Proclaims the Gospel, NAB translation. All write down words, phrases, images which “resonate.”

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Liturgical Context

For the second week in a row we are reading from John, instead of from Mark! Last week we read John 2:13-25, the “Cleansing” of the Temple. Today’s passage is the last part of the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, John 3:1-21.

Gospel Context

Nicodemus is a “ruler of the Jews.” Unlike most of “the Jews” he is sympathetic to Jesus. He comes to Jesus “at night.” A sign that he is “in the dark,” and also that he lacks courage. He calls Jesus “Rabbi.” He tells Jesus that “We know you are a teacher come from God” because of the Jesus’ signs. Whenever anybody in John says they “know” something, the reader can be sure they are wrong! Faith based on signs is not the deepest faith. “A teacher come from God” is a woefully inadequate description of Jesus, by John’s standards.

Jesus Responds to Nicodemus

The first part of the response has to do with being born -- or begotten!²⁴ -- *anōthen*. Nicodemus, the “straight man,” takes *anōthen* to mean “again.” How can somebody get back into the mother’s womb? Misunderstanding is a literary characteristic of John. It gives Jesus a chance to teach about being born from above. For John, Jesus is the heavenly revealer who explains the way to eternal life. There were legends about visionaries who had seen the mysteries of heaven, and who revealed them to people. For example, books were written claiming to be from Enoch. The Johannine Jesus emphatically denies the validity of any of these legends. **No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man (John 3:13 RSV).** It is at this point that our passage begins.

Son of Man

Most Christians think that “**Son of Man**” refers to the lowly “human nature” of Jesus. This is opposed to “**Son of God**,” which is often taken to describe his “divine nature.”²⁵

²⁴ The Greek word *gennaō* can mean either “bear” or “beget,” depending on whether the subject is male or female. Most translations go with “born,” because Nicodemus mentions the mother’s womb. But Brown translates it as “begotten from above.”
²⁵ I will not explain here the various biblical meanings of “Son of God,” none of which involve “divine nature,” and some of which are fairly humble. Such an explanation would go too long. But if anyone wants to discuss this during the Q&A, that will be fine.

Neither of these views do justice to the range of meaning of these two phrases in biblical thought. As a matter of fact, no Gospel writer thought in terms of either human or divine “nature.”²⁶ Most of the time in the OT, “Son of Man” is a lowly title -- it generally means “mortal human being.” However in Daniel 7, the “Son of Man” is the **one who will judge the world in God’s name**.²⁷ Whenever a NT author gives this title to Jesus, he is claiming that Jesus will judge the world in God’s name.

OT Reference. “Serpent Lifted Up”

The story is found in Numbers 21:5-9

The people have begun the Exodus. But the desert is hot & dry & they are hungry & thirsty. They are sick of manna. They complain against Moses. As punishment, the LORD sends fiery serpents to bite them. Many die.

The people apologize to Moses. He prays for them.

God instructs Moses to make an image of a serpent, and lift it up on a pole.

Whoever sees the serpent recovers from the poisonous bite.

The Point of the Story

Here is what *The Jewish Study Bible* has to say about the serpent.

The bronze serpent as an apotropaic (evil-averting, from Greek “turn from”) symbol seems to be the etiological account for the bronze serpent, Neḥushtan, which was worshipped in Jerusalem until the late 8th century when King Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Kings 18:4).²⁸

That is, the legend explains why there was a bronze serpent in Solomon’s Temple until about 700 B.C.²⁹

John’s Use of the Story

John has no concern for what the story meant “when the ink was wet.”

The story of the serpent is useful because of its imagery: healing (salvation) comes from the serpent **being lifted up**.

The Johannine Jesus saves the world by **being lifted up**.

“Lifting up” has a double meaning for John. 1) Being raised on the cross; 2) Returning to heaven

John sees the cross as **part of the glorification** of Jesus.

He sees **cross-resurrection-ascension** as “being lifted up.”

This is why John’s perspective on the cross is different from any other Evangelist.

It is why we read John every Good Friday, and why we dare to call that day “Good.”

Eschatology Comes in Two Flavors

Eschatos is the Greek word meaning “last.”

In traditional theology “the last things” refer to: judgment, heaven, and hell.

1) **Future** eschatology sees “the last things” as occurring **in the future**.

This is the “majority eschatology” in the NT.

2) **Realized** eschatology sees “the last things” happening **right now**.

Future eschatology can be found in John.

But his main stress is on **realized** eschatology.

²⁶ The term “divine nature” appears only once in the entire NT, in 2 Peter 1:4. According to Raymond Brown (*Introduction to the NT*, pp. 761-762) the Second Epistle of Peter was probably the last book of the NT to be written, about 130 A.D.

²⁷ In Daniel 7, “Son of Man” is a **collective** figure, a **symbol** that stands for **all of the saints**. There is a heated debate among NT scholars about **when** Jews began to think of the “Son of Man” as an **individual** person. Some assert that this had already happened by the time of Jesus. Others, including my *Doktorvater* Joseph Fitzmyer, insist that Christians were the first to use the title in this individual sense, and that they did not do it until **after** the resurrection.

²⁸ Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, and M. Fishbane, eds., *Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 325, via *Logos*.

²⁹ This is one of the stories that makes me **strongly suspect** that the command against images is a **later addition** to the Decalogue. Another is the description of the cherubim statues in Exodus 25. A biblical “cherub” is not a cute little angel; it is ferocious winged creature, part human, part beast that guards a temple.

The evangelist stresses this in the discourses found on the lips of Jesus.
 These discourses contain material that goes back to Jesus.
 They also contain seven decades of post-resurrectional meditation on the mystery of the risen Christ.

Realized Eschatology of Judgment

Whoever does not believe is **already** condemned.
 This is the verdict: people **prefer** darkness to light. **Right now!**
 The “Judgement,” is not something that will happen in the far distant future.
 “Judgment” occurs whenever someone is faced with the choice to believe, or not believe, in Jesus Christ.

Hating & Loving the Light

These categories are not primarily *emotional* categories. They are *moral* categories.
 Those who hate the light are identical with those who do “wicked things”
 Those who love the light are identical with those who “live the truth.”
 Truth is not “**intellectual**” but “**relational**.”
 Think of spouses who are “**true**” to each other.
 After 60 years of marriage one might say, “I will never **understand** that man / woman!”
 Later in the Gospel, the Johannine Jesus will say, “I am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5).
 From John’s perspective, loving or hating the Light is synonymous with how one responds to Jesus Christ.

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5. Margie Caplis Proclaims the Gospel from a the Jerusalem Bible

6. Participants Name the Good News: for the original listeners; for the present-day hearer.

7. **Name the Challenge.** Participants share the challenges of the text for the *first* hearers.
 How does the text challenge the experience and understanding of the *present day* listener?
 What is the *pain* and *bondage* and *brokenness* in the human situation touched by this text?

Appendix: The Preacher who “got lost.” Ephesians 2:1-7.

We start with the KJV, changing only one punctuation mark -- the period at the end of verse 3; also modifying only the punctuation by removing the capital letters at the beginning of each verse, and striking out the *words in italics* -- KJV puts them in italics not to emphasize them, but because they are not in the Greek.

And you ~~*hath he quickened*~~, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, ⁴ but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in sins, **hath quickened** us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ and hath raised ~~*us*~~ up together, and made ~~*us*~~ sit together in heavenly ~~*places*~~ in Christ Jesus: ⁷ that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in ~~*his*~~ kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (KJV)

Note: *hath he quickened*. There is no verb yet in the Greek, but the Greek reader is waiting for one. The word for “you” does not simply mean “you.” It means “somebody blanked you.” At this point the Greek reader does not know what the “blank” action is, or who is going to do the blanking -- but he knows that somebody or something is going to blank “you.” KJV “cheats” and puts the verb **hath quickened** in from verse 4. English speakers are not used to waiting that long for a verb. Greek speakers are used to it -- if the sentence is well written. This one isn’t!

Okay, now let's modernize the spelling a bit. "ye" > "you," etc.

And you ~~hath he quickened~~, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: ³ among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, ⁴ but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) ⁶ and has raised ~~us~~ up together, and made ~~us~~ sit together in heavenly ~~places~~ in Christ Jesus: ⁷ that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in ~~his~~ kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (KJV)

Now let's see what we can do to show the "structure."

And you,

who were dead in trespasses and **sins**;

² wherein in time past you walked

according to the course of this world,

according to the **prince** of the power of the air,

the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:

info about "you"

modifies "sins"

ditto

info about the "prince"

Here is where he "gets lost." He switches from "you" to "we."

Why? He wants to assure the Ephesians he does not think they were worse than everybody else!

In effect, he is saying, "All of us Christians used to be like that. Don't take this too personally!"

But by entering this "aside" the preacher / writer loses track of where he was.

He is going to forget to put in the verb!

Also we need to fix "had our conversation." That sounds like talking, but that's not what it meant back then.

³ among whom also we all **had our conversation** in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, ⁴ but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) ⁶ and has raised ~~us~~ up together, and made ~~us~~ sit together in heavenly ~~places~~ in Christ Jesus: ⁷ that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in ~~his~~ kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (KJV)

Second attempt to analyze "What Went Wrong"

And you,

who were dead in trespasses and **sins**;

² wherein in time past you walked

according to the course of this world,

according to the **prince** of the power of the air,

the spirit that now works in the **children of disobedience**:

³ among **whom** also **we all behaved** in times past

in the lusts of our flesh,

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;

and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others,

info about "you"

modifies "sins"

ditto

info about the "prince"

info about how **we behaved**.

At this point, he realizes he is hopelessly lost. So he tries to get back on track.

⁴ but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) ⁶ and has raised ~~us~~ up together, and made ~~us~~ sit together in heavenly ~~places~~ in Christ Jesus: ⁷ that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in ~~his~~ kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (KJV)

Go to the next page.

Third attempt to analyze “What Went Wrong”

And you,

2 who were dead in trespasses and sins;
wherein in time past you walked
according to the course of this world,
according to the **prince** of the power of the air,
3 the spirit that now works in the **children of disobedience**:
among **whom** also **we all behaved** in times past
in the lusts of our flesh,
fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;
and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others --
4 but **God**,
who is rich in mercy,
for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5 even when we were dead in sins,
has quickened us together with Christ,
(by grace you are saved;)
6 and **has raised (us) up together**,
and **made (us) sit together**
in the heavens, in Christ Jesus:
7 **that**
in the ages to come
he might show the exceeding riches of **his grace**
in ~~his~~ kindness toward us
through Christ Jesus. (KJV)

info about “you”
modifies “sins”
ditto

info about the “prince”

info about how **we behaved**.

he realizes he is “lost”

his second try

contrast **Gods** action with ours
describes God.

describes **has quickened**

ASIDE. modifies “has quickened”
God’s second action.

introducing God’s **purpose**

when

here’s **purpose**

info about **his grace**.

ditto