Biblical Christians in Culture. *Looking at the world through the lens of The Word.*Discovering, applying biblical Truth,confronting untruth with Truth.

**Ep. 9: Superhero**

Internal change is dependent upon an external change-agent. The needed remedy is rejected, however, because it is uncomfortable needing submission and sacrifice.

*REPEATED THEMES 1. Belief affects behavior and behavior affects belief. 2. Everyone everywhere has assumptions, pre-thinking. 3. Christian thinking is molded by Scripture’s commands, principles, & doctrine 4. Everyone has “doctrine” that forms their thinking. 5. Doctrine influences living.*

Superheroes? *Marvel, DC, Looking Out for a Hero, Spitfire Grill, Broken Down Palace, The Passion of The Christ, Les Misérables, Gran Torino, Narnia,*

*Comparison with the Cultural View Draw the diagram:*

The Kinsman Redeemer In the Old Testament a family member who had position plus power was able to help a weaker person in the group—literally “bailing them out” of bad situations (Lev 25:47-55; Deut 25:5-10). Such was the case of Ruth and Boaz. Ruth had become part of a family by marriage when her husband died. Boaz, in line to perform the function of benefactor, ultimately gave Ruth his own status and security she could never achieve by herself. In fact, Jesus’ lineage can be traced back to that providential relationship (Matthew 1:5). Jesus has become our “kinsman redeemer” our “superhero.” We need cosmic (*comic!*) help. We realize we cannot save ourselves. The Christian worldview explains the redemption we seek and the mercy we need which cannot be achieved by human deed. We are literally “purchased” as the biblical word *redemption* suggests. Jesus is our “big brother” (Hebrews 2:12, 14, 17), subduing our enemy (2:14), saving us (2:14-15), by His sacrifice (2:9).

Inheritance matters. The biblical narrative is full of the fact that the firstborn does not always get the birthright. Jesus comes from a long list of supposedly “second place” people—exactly the kind of people God always uses to fulfill His will (“the second Adam” 1 Cor 15). Abel over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, or Jacob over Esau. Jesus’ genealogy is full of folks not first in line. Perez, the second twin, came out on top in Matthew (Gen 38, Ruth 4). Judah is mentioned rather than three brothers in front of him (Gen 49:3-12). Boaz was second kinsman redeemer to care for Ruth, from whom came David (Ruth 4). Matthew’s reader is reminded at Christmas: the first shall be last, the last shall be first (Matt 19.30; 20.16).

Sin and Salvation The four reactions to sin in Genesis 3:6, 7? *Adam and Eve (1) had their eyes opened; (2) realized they were naked; (3) covered themselves; and (4) hid from God.* Practical implication? *(1) We know when we’ve done wrong; (2) something good was ruined; (3) we use the terms ‘cover up,’ ‘cover for me,’ and ‘cover your tracks’; and (4) we avoid conviction. Genesis 3:15—Speaking to the serpent the Lord God says Eve’s offspring will “crush your head” (Rom 16:20, Col 2:15). In the future, the adversary would be defeated, a promise fulfilled by Jesus (Rev 12, 19-20). Genesis 3:20—Eve was named “the mother of all living” indicating that even though death was promised for disobedience (2:16, 17), life continued. Genesis 3:21—Adam and Eve’s coverings (3:7) were insufficient. The first blood sacrifice was made here to re-cover. Genesis 3:22-24—Adam and Eve were driven from the garden so that they might not be able to eat from the tree of life and live forever in their sinful condition separated from God. Death gave hope for reconciliation with God.*

Scripture & Threads: Exodus; Leviticus; Deuteronomy; Zechariah; Rom 3:21-26; 5:6-8; 6:23; Eph 2:4-10; 1 Tim 1:12-17; Philemon; Heb 10:1-14; Rev 5:9, 10. Substitute, high priest, priests, sacrifice, tabernacle, holy of holies, covenant, blood, mediator

Romans 6:23

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| **The Wages of Sin** | **The Gift of God** |
| **Wages…** | **Gift…** |
| **…are Earned** | **…is Unearned** |
| **…are Deserved** | **…is Undeserved** |
| **The end result is Death** | **The end result is eternal Life** |

**Imprecatory Principles in Scripture** Key to understanding violence and justice in Scripture are the imprecatory Psalms. The songs of Psalms 109 or 137, for example, include prayers for the punishment of God’s enemies. Calling down judgment on adversaries is both a very human and very troubling response to evil this side of heaven. Bearing the image of God—His character including justice—we desire justice. Invoking curses on others seems to be a difficult proposition in an age of tolerance and for Christians who are called to love their neighbor. Since Scripture calls for justice in this life, I offer my "dirty dozen" responses to believers’ cries for justice now.

**1. As poetry,** the Psalms express emotion in poetic fashion. Personification, hyperbole, etc., are normal but hyperbolic responses to actual desires is normal in ancient Near Eastern expression.

**2. As reality**, the Psalms are expressions of humans in crisis, responding to injustice, cruelty, oppression, slander, betrayal, conspiracy, personal distress, etc.

**3. As anticipation,** if there is no justice after life, there can be no justice in this life. Short-term versus long-term response to injustice.

**4. As severity,** the Psalms express feelings beyond what many Westerners would consider "normal" in the 21st century.

**5. As misery,** the Psalms are expressions of serious rage, anger, grief, and fury against evildoers.

**6. As parity,** the Psalms are expressions of fairness, impartiality, and even-handedness based on God’s righteousness.

**7. As right**, indignation is a proper, personal response to injustice. The only possible redemption available is the pure, unadulterated innocence of Jesus’ sacrifice.

**8. As loyalty,** the Psalms are expressions of a theocratic commitment to the Suzerain-vassal treaty where the king protects his subjects. Prayers to “break the arms of the wicked” (Ps 10:15) or “smash the teeth” (58:6) or “turn your wrath upon” (69:22-28) would not be an expression of personal revenge but of Eternal retribution promised by the suzerain (Deut 32:35-36).

**9. As guarantee,** the Psalms promise and predict what He will do (1:4 and 35:5; 35:8 and 9:15; 35:26 and 6:10).

**10. As control,** imprecatory Psalms actually restrain the believer from physical violence, leaving the response of injustice to God.

**11. As finality**, the Psalms are expressions of God’s promise that evil and evildoers would be defeated and overthrown. “If the Jews cursed more bitterly than the Pagans this was, I think, at least in part because they took right and wrong more seriously. For if we look at their railings we find they are usually agree not because these things have been done to them but because these things are manifestly wrong, are hateful to God as well as to the victim.” C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (1958): 30.

**12. As jealousy,** the Psalms express God’s zeal for His people and His righteousness.

We are reticent to tell others we like "justice movies" because we live in an age of niceness.  But the world is not nice.  Evil exists and must be stopped.  Yes, it would be nice to think everything can be solved by human love, mercy, kindness, and generosity.  Only Jesus can establish peace for humans after His ultimate recompense.  We should be honest with ourselves.  We like to see the bad guys "get it in the end."  As humans we respond to evil desiring justice, because we bear the image of The One who is just.

(Taken from “Violence in Film,” Mark Eckel, *When the Lights Go Down: Movie Review as Christian Practice*)