



PCM D-Groups 201: The Gospel from Cover to Cover
Session 14: The Dawning of The New Age
By Chip Bugnar

PCM Discipleship Group Details:

- To get into a small group, sign up on your tables tonight!
- Text questions to pcmdgroups@gmail.com
- CHANGE OF SCHEDULE: Next Big D is NEXT WEEK (APRIL 6th)

Review

- Luke/Acts concentrates on the Messiah and his mission.
- Pay attention to the introductions to the gospel accounts of Jesus' life. They preview the whole message of the book.
- Jesus is the Christ!

Understanding Scripture:

- 1. Jesus ascends to his rightful throne in Acts 1. He is God's victorious warrior over Satan, sin and death.**
 - a. Genesis 3:15: Jesus was wounded to the point of death in the struggle against Satan, sin, and death. He won the war at his resurrection, but we live in the in-between times where Jesus Christ has unrivaled authority, yet allows his enemies to remain until they are brought to final judgment.
 - i. Colossians 2:15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
 - b. Psalm 8: What Adam lost, Jesus regained. God has reasserted man's authority – crowning Jesus with glory and honor. He is the new Adam (Hebrews 2:5-9, Romans 5:12-21).
 - i. Ephesians 1:20-23 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
 - c. Like Joseph: rejected by his own
 - d. Prophet Like Moses: Matthew, Acts 3,
 - e. Jesus is the Son of God and Son of Man: Daniel 7:13-14
 - f. His ascension begins his priestly session at the right hand where He intercedes for his own (Psalm 110, Hebrews 10). He is a priest forever according to the line of Melchizedek. There is no more need for the priesthood under the old covenant system. Jesus tore the veil of the temple that separated sinners from God's presence. The temple of his body grants access to sinners that come to God through him.
 - g. All of God's promises are yes in Jesus.
- 2. A New Beginning: the restoration promised in the prophets has begun on earth in partial ways through the outpouring of the Spirit.**



- a. The resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit unleash some of the powers of the age to come into this fallen age.
- b. Believers in Christ share in Christ's resurrection power to overcome in this age. Christians are being "recreated" in the image of Christ.
 - i. Remember Noah! The re-creation he wasn't able to provide, Jesus is now providing.
 - ii. Ephesians 2:1-10: Believers WERE dead in sin, yet because of God's mercy Christ shares his life and authority with us in the heavenly realm. Verse 10: we are re-created in Christ Jesus for good works.
 - iii. Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
 - v. Ephesians 2:10, 4:20-24
 - vi. Colossians 3:9-11
 - vii. The power to obey stems from the reality that we live in the overlap of the ages. The Spirit is God's empowering presence among us.
 - viii. 1 Corinthians 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
- c. **Bondage to decay → Freedom to live**
 - i. Creation: Romans 8:19-25: This world is still in bondage to decay. The people of God groan to be released from this bondage and to be revealed as sons of God by the Spirit. The Spirit makes the pain of this age the pain of childbirth – pains that lead to life. His presence is the "first-fruits" of the harvest at the end of the age.
 - 1. It's not that we ESCAPE the pains of this age. We are still weak and frail and our bodies are still in decay.
 - 2. The resurrection happens on the "first day of the week" in John 20:1 and 19. This emphasis reveals a new creation week that has begun (Mary also thinks Jesus is a gardener In 20:15 which would also remind us of Genesis 2).
- d. **Fragmentation → Wholeness, Unity**
 - i. "We must see the fall as anti-creation, the blurring of distinctions, and the rupturing of bonds, and the one as a result of the other. Thus, human beings who to be "like God, knowing good and evil," succeed only in alienating themselves from God and from each other. Even the good and fruitful earth becomes their foe. (Genesis 3:17-18, 4:12-14)...The story of the fall tells us that sin corrupts: it puts asunder what God had joined together and joins together what God had put asunder." Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, 29-30.
 - ii. The old divisions that marked this fallen world are beginning to be undone among the people of God.
 - 1. O Come, O Come Immanuel:
 "O come, Desire of nations, bind
 In one the hearts of all mankind;
 Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
 And be Thyself our King of Peace."
 - iii. The tower of Babel and its confusion and scattering are reversed at the day of Pentecost when the ascended Jesus sends the Spirit. The 3,000 deaths at Sinai are reversed in the 3,000 lives that are saved.
 - iv. One of the most amazing aspects of the life of the church in Acts is how they shared their possessions (2:45, 4:32). This newfound unity and love was the result of the Spirit's work. Sin led to isolation in relationships (Genesis 3-4), but now God's Spirit is binding the church together. This is the embodiment of Deuteronomy 15:4-5.
 - v. The Mystery in Ephesians: Two becoming One



1. Ephesians 1:9-11: The pinnacle of the mystery is when all things – in the heavens and on earth – sum up in Christ.
2. Ephesians 2:11-22: The church prefigures this reality now on earth.
 - a. 2:14: For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,
 - b. The division that marked humanity embodied in the conflict between Jew and Gentile has been overcome in Christ as a preview of the age to come when all division will cease.
 - c. “The outpouring of the Spirit prefigures the end, and thus the community that lives and acts in the power of the Spirit is an eschatological community, bringing God’s future into being in communal life and thus witnessing to the world about the power of the resurrection.” Richard Hayes, *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 131.
3. Ephesians 5:22-33: A portrait of the mystery is found in Christian marriage where the two become one. Ephesians 5:31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.
4. Ephesians 3:4-6 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,
- vi. The anticipated unity of all things is already occurring among the church (still imperfectly), but will not reach its fullest expression until heaven and earth are one in Christ.
 1. David Wells “Already in the church, despite its manifold weaknesses and sins, we see the dawn of a new order of things in which the displacement of God from life is being overturned and in which the alienation of people one from another is beginning to be healed.”

3. The emergence of the mostly Gentile people of God, the church, caused a theological crisis, which many of the NT writings address.

- a. **Crisis 1: God’s faithfulness to Israel is called into question: is God being faithful to his word to bless Israel?**
 - i. What about God’s promises to Israel? The NT indicates that the large majority of Jewish people missed the Messiah. Didn’t God promise to bless Israel? Is God a faithful God? Does God keep his word?
- b. **Crisis 2: Preserving the Unity Christ Purchased**
 - i. Jews and Gentiles together? In one body? That gets messy. Preserving the unity that Christ purchased came to be one of the most pressing needs in the early church.

4. This tension is evident in the macro-structure of Acts.

- a. Luke very deliberately mirrors the ministries of Peter, the apostle of the Jews, and Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. Luke is displaying the unity between the Gentile mission and the Jewish mission.



Peter	Paul
Heal man lame from birth (3:1-10)	Heals man lame from birth (14:8-10)
Peter casts out unclean spirits (5:16)	Paul calls a demon to come out of girl (16:18)
Peter cured sick who were brought to him (5:16)	Paul healed sick who were brought to him (28:9)
Peter brings dead back to life (9:36-41)	Paul raises Eutychus back to life (20:9-12)
Peter “worshipped” and proclaims “I too am only a mortal” (Acts 10:25)	Paul and Barnabas “worshipped” and reply “We are mortals just like you” 14:15
Peter lays hands on people to receive Spirit (8:14-17, 10:44)	Paul lays hands on people to receive Spirit (19:1-7)
Peter arrested in temple and brought before Sanhedrin (4:1-3, 5:25-40)	Paul arrested in temple and brought before Sanhedrin (21:27-40, 23:1-10)

- b. Peter reluctantly affirms the validity of God’s work among the Gentiles through the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10-11. Paul (Gentile missionary) stubbornly desires to go back to Jerusalem (for the Jews) in 19:21 and following. If the Jewish believers follow their leader (Peter), they will see the validity of God’s work among the Gentiles. If the Gentiles follow their leader (Paul), they must have a concern for Jewish believers (and the Jews in general) as well.
- c. Acts 15 and Galatians 2 reveal the tension this diversity created.
- d. Luke very carefully helps the reader to see the Jewish priority of the gospel. Salvation is of the Jews. But, as Luke records, the same hard heart that characterized Israel during the time of Moses (Deuteronomy 29-31), Joshua (24), Daniel (9), and Jesus (Gospels) continues to this day. See Acts 7 at the stoning of Stephen and Acts 13 for examples.
- e. Would the Jewish believers be like the elder brother in the prodigal Son story (Luke 15)?

Side: Your New Testament arose out of the context of mission. The churches that were planted through the narrative of Acts become the recipients of these letters from Paul and others. The warp and woof of the NT is the ongoing work of the gospel through these churches.

5. These two issues converge in the book of Romans.

- a. Unity: Tensions in Rome are evident (Romans 14:13, 19, 15:1-7, 3:29-30, 4)
 - i. How does Paul address their hearts? Romans 1:15
 - 1. Disunity is normally the result of misapplying or misunderstanding the gospel.
 - 2. This is why Paul explains the gospel then commands them to be unified in books like Ephesians and Galatians.
 - ii. Romans 1:18-3:20 God’s Righteous Wrath is Revealed against All Peoples – Jew and Gentile alike
 - 1. God’s just judgment is upon all humanity.
 - 2. 1:18-32: Gentiles, 2:1-3:8 Jews, 3:9-20 both
 - 3. 3:9: What then? Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;
 - 4. This ruins Jewish self-righteousness and overconfidence. Their boast in the Law is empty (2:23) because they break the law and dishonor God.
 - 5. Does anyone want God to be fair based on this assessment of what we deserve from God?
 - 6. What if God were to judge the whole world in their sin? Would God be righteous?
 - iii. Romans 3:19-31: God’s Righteousness for Everyone Who Believes



1. "Apart from Law" ...this way of righteousness surpasses the ethnic constraints that the Law demanded. It's for everyone who believes in Jesus.
 2. 3:22:even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
 3. If all the world is unrighteous, how can a righteous God declare them righteous? (3:24-26)
 4. God punished Jesus Christ in our place. Jesus fully absorbed the wrath of God for sinners (propitiation). God's righteousness is on display (3:25, 26) because he did not ignore sin or hide sin. His Son paid the penalty for our sin.
 5. "Grace is the will of God to magnify the worth of God by giving sinners the right to delight in God without obscuring the glory of God." John Piper, *The Pleasures of God*
 6. 3:27-31: Boasting in ourselves is nullified by justification by faith alone. God is one and justifies Jews the same way he justifies Gentiles: through faith in Jesus.
- iv. Romans 4:1-25: Abraham is the father of Jewish believers and Gentile Believers alike
 1. Faith highlighted (4:3, 4:5, 4:9, 4:11, 4:12, 4:13, 4:14, 4:16, 4:17, 4:18, 4:19, 4:20, 4:24)
 2. Jews and Gentiles relate to Abraham on the basis of faith like Abraham.
 - v. Paul has effectively leveled the playing field: Jews and Gentiles deserve God's righteous judgment, Jews and Gentiles are declared righteous in the same way (faith, apart from law) and Jewish believers and Gentile believers share Abraham as their father.
 - vi. Romans 11:17-21: Paul's confronts potential Gentile pride for God's choice to soften their hearts and harden Israel's.
 - vii. Romans 12:1-16
 - viii. Romans 14: Controversies over the Conscience: Some are less free to enjoy their full freedoms in Christ, and some. How should we respond? 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
 - ix. Romans 15:1-7
 - x. Paul's plea for unity is succinctly summarized in 15:8-13.
 1. Christ serves Israel, confirming God's truthfulness and so that the Gentiles would glorify God for his mercy.
 2. The 3 parts of the Old Testament support his argument: Law (Deut 32:43), Prophets (2 Sam 22, Isaiah 11:10), and the Writings (Psalm 18:49, 117:1).
 3. This has been the plan since the beginning. If Christ sings among the Gentiles, surely other Jews can!
- b. Paul ends Romans with a request to support his mission trip to Spain (Romans 15:22-24).
 - i. Disunity distracts from the mission of the church. It turns the church inward versus propelling the church outward into the world.
 1. Philippians: Unity through humility for the progress of the gospel!
 - c. **God's faithfulness to Israel:** why is this important for us to consider? (ILL: marrying someone who has a history of adultery, why?)
 - i. Romans 1:1-4: what is Paul emphasizing from the beginning?
 - ii. Romans 1:17 and Habakkuk 2:4
 - iii. Romans 3:1-8:
 - iv. Romans 4:18-25: Hoping against Hope: Remaining hopeful like Abraham despite the lack of visible evidence that God is being faithful
 1. Hope in Present Sufferings (5:1-11)
 2. Hope over the Dominion of Sin and Death because of Adam's Fall (5:12-21)
 3. Hope in the Present Battle with Sin (6)



4. Hope Over the Law's Futility (7)
5. Hope In Present Sufferings (8:18-25)
6. Hope that God's promises to Israel remain true (9-11)
- v. Romans 15:1-13: God has been faithful to His promises in the Old Testament.
- vi. More on this next week...

Standing Under Scripture (Submission):

1. We should marvel at how God is orchestrating his redemptive plan to bless all nations.

- a. Gratitude and humility: we deserved his wrath, but God is rich in mercy!

2. The church is an integral part of God's redemptive plan. The church is the ongoing ministry of Jesus on earth.

- a. "The church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. It is not a divine afterthought. It is not an accident of history. On the contrary, the church is God's new community. For his purpose is not just to save isolated individuals and so perpetuate our loneliness, but rather to build his church, that is, to call out of the world a people for his own glory." John Stott, *The Living Church*.
- b. "Churchless Christianity makes about as much sense as Christless churches." Kevin DeYoung

3. Christians should be realistic, yet optimistic in this age.

- a. Despair? "The church embodies the power of the resurrection in the midst of a not-yet redeemed world...In the present time, the new creation already appears, but only proleptically; consequently, we hang in suspense between Jesus' resurrection and parousia. The eschatological framework of life in Christ imparts to Christian existence its strange-temporal sensibility, its odd capacity for simultaneous joy amidst suffering and impatience with things as they are...Thus, the New Testament's eschatology creates a critical framework that pronounces judgment upon our complacency as well as upon our presumptuous despair." Hayes, *Moral Vision*, 198.
- b. Resignation? Life "can" be otherwise and life "ought" to be otherwise (David Wells, *Prayer: Rebelling Against the Status Quo.*)
- c. Prayer?
 - i. Romans 8: Groaning that leads to life.
 - ii. "What, then, is the nature of petitionary prayer? It is, in essence, rebellion—rebellion against the world in its fallenness, the absolute and undying refusal to accept as normal what is pervasively abnormal. It is, in this its negative aspect, the refusal of every agenda, every scheme, every interpretation that is at odds with the norm as originally established by God." (David Wells, "Prayer: Rebelling Against the Status Quo.")
- d. Hope against hope: Romans 4:18-25, 5:1-11, 8:18-23
- e. "People tend to make two mistakes when they think about the redeemed life. The first is to underestimate the sin that remains in us; it's still there and it can still hurt us. The second is to underestimate the strength of God's grace; God is determined to make us new. As a result, all Christians need to say two things. We admit that we are redeemed *sinners*. But we also say boldly and joyously that we are *redeemed sinners*." Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Beyond Doubt*, 89.

4. We cannot be indifferent about our unity as the body of Christ. We must be diligent to preserve it in the Spirit.

- a. Romans, Ephesians 4:1-3, Philippians
- b. The cross unites us to one another. The Spirit keeps us together (Galatians 5).



c. "The war is over, so keep the peace." Gordon Fee

5. The powers of the age to come are not for us to live more comfortable lives, but to give our lives away for others. This power is demonstrated in our weakness.

a. 2 Corinthians: what are the tests of a genuine work of the Spirit?

b. The Spirit's work conforms us to Jesus' pattern of life. He became poor so that we might become rich. He became weak so that we would be made strong. Don't become so "spirit-filled" that you cease demonstrating the cross-bearing ethic of Jesus.

6. HOMEWORK: Read Romans 9-11 before next Tuesday.

