

Session 2

Old Testament, Christian Principles Today and Public Policy



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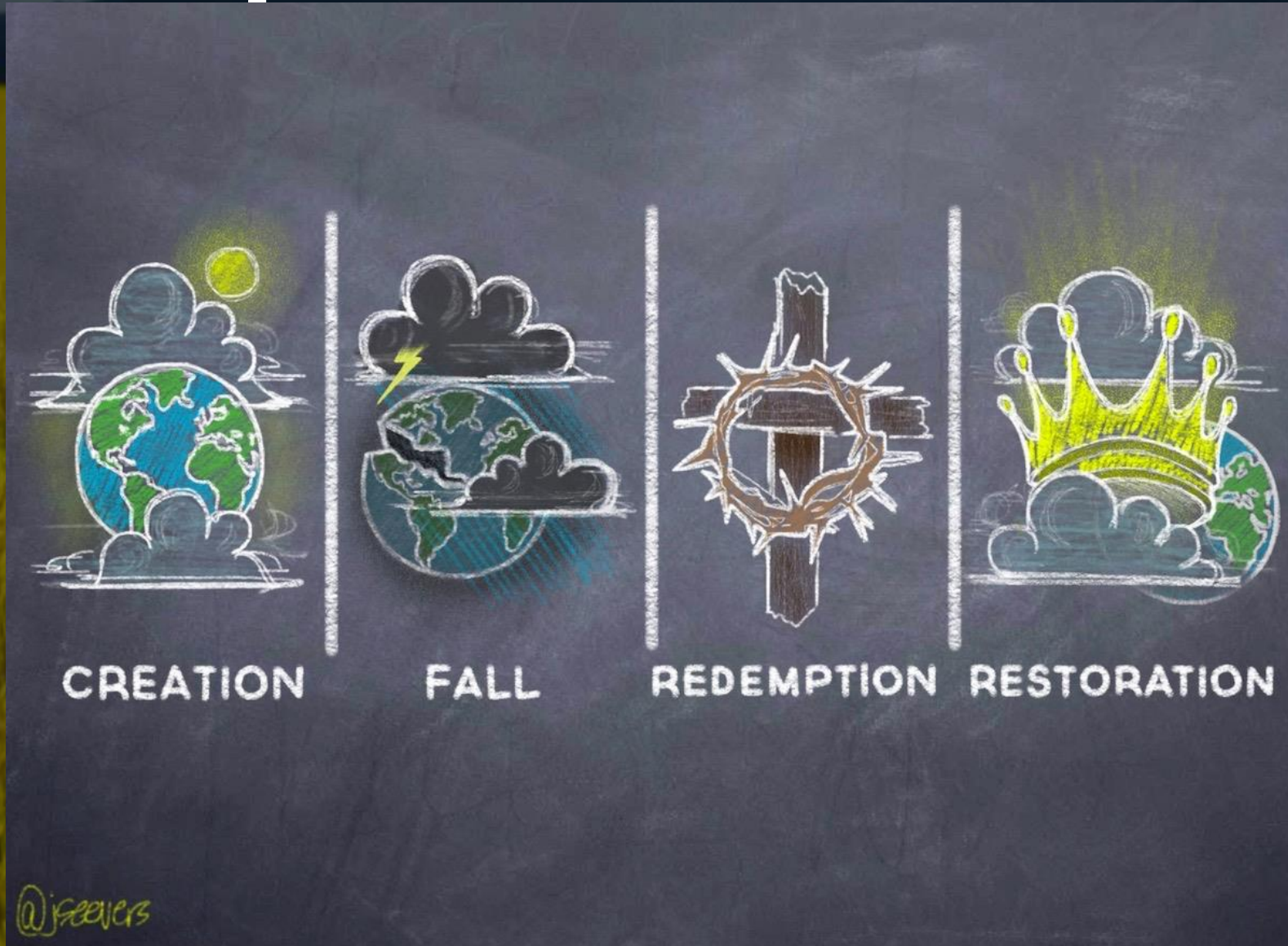
Biblical understanding of the
importance of land

God's Story



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God's story



Creation: shalom. Peace. Earth was full of God's shalom, the kind of peace in which everything works according to God's intention. The world was made for human flourishing, there we could live in joy in the presence of our Maker, worshiping God by loving Him and one another forever.



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God's Story



- **Fall:** Adam and Eve rejected God's rule over them. We refer to their rebellious choice as "the fall," We have-- through our attitudes and actions-- declared ourselves to be God's enemies. This rebellion results in physical and spiritual death.



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God's story

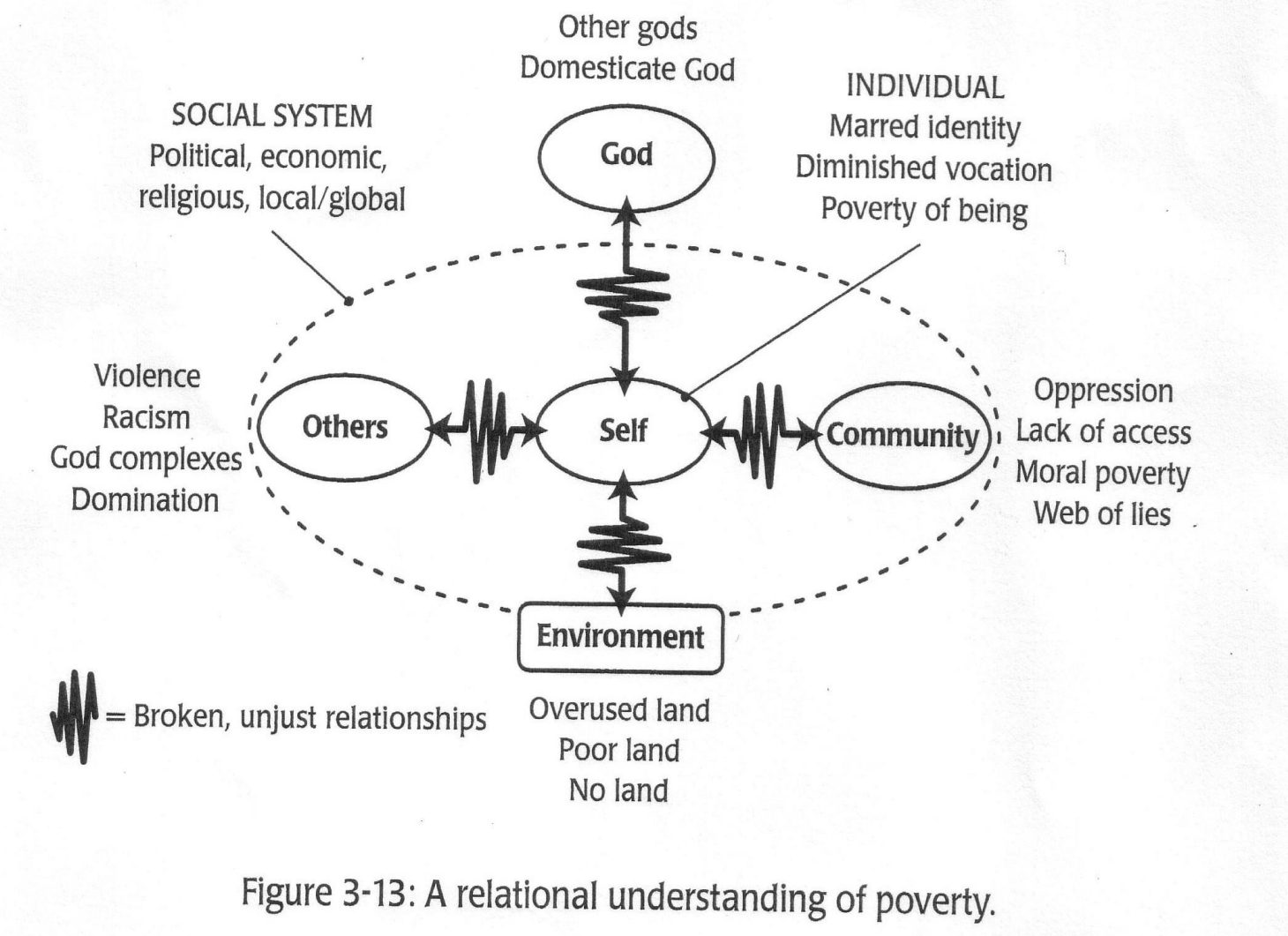


Figure 3-13: A relational understanding of poverty.

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God's story



- **Redemption:** God implements a master plan for redeeming His world and rescuing fallen sinners. In the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself comes to renew the world and restore His people. The grand narrative of Scripture climaxes with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

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God's story

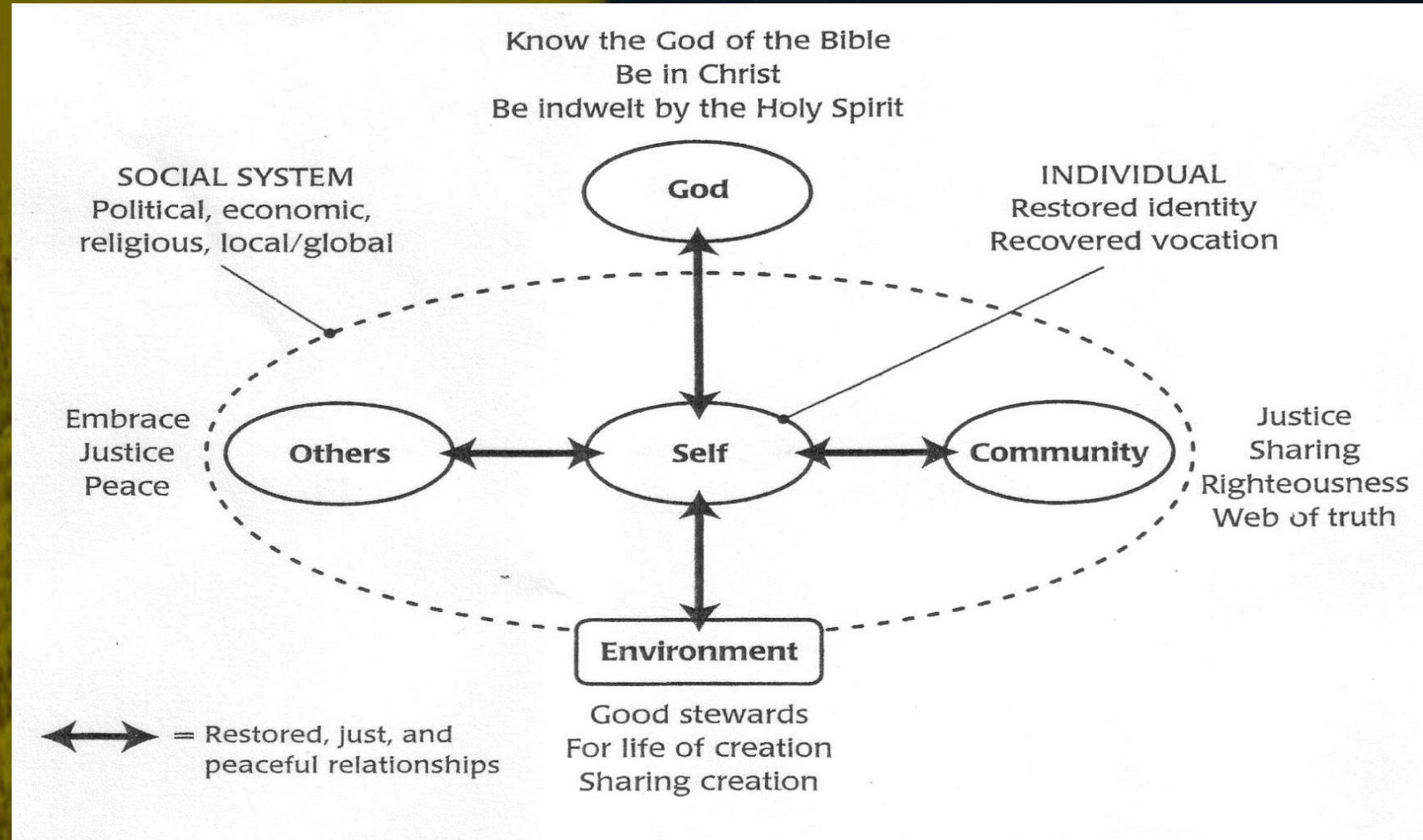


Figure 5-3: Transformed relationships.

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God's Story

- **Restoration:** The story doesn't end with redemption. God has promised to renew the whole world, and the Bible gives us a peak into this glorious future. The restoration of all things will take place in two ways. Christ will return to judge sin and evil, and He will usher in righteousness and peace. God will purge this world of evil once and for all.



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God's Story

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How should Christians apply the Old Testament Law?



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Old Testament Law today

1. What did the law mean to the audience?

- Identify the historical and literary context of the specific law in question
- Were the Israelites on the bank of the Jordan preparing to enter the land (Deuteronomy) when the law was given or were they at Mount Sinai soon after the Exodus
- Was the law given in response to a specific situation that had arisen, or was the command describing requirements for Israel after they moved into the Promised Land?
- What other laws are in the immediate context?



Old Testament Law today

1. What did the law mean to the audience?

- How did this particular law relate to the Old Covenant?
- Did it govern how they were to relate to each other?
- Did it relate to agriculture or commerce?
- Was it specifically related to life in the Promised Land?



Old Testament Law today

2. The difference between the initial audience and the believers today

- theological and situational differences between Christians today and the initial audience
- For example believers in the present church age are under the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant. Thus they are not under the laws of the Old Covenant
- They are not Israelites preparing to dwell in the Promised Land, nor do they approach God through the sacrifice of animals.



Old Testament Law today

2. The difference between the initial audience and the believers today

- Also Christians live under secular governments and not under a theocracy
- Christians face pressures not from Canaanite religions but from different non-Christian worldviews and philosophies



Old Testament Law today

2. Develop universal principles from the text

- Behind the Mosaic commands for the original audience lie universal, timeless principles
- "What universal principle is reflected in this specific law? What broad principle may be applied today?"
- These universal principles will often be related directly to the character of God and His holiness, the nature of sin, the issue of obedience, or concern for other people



Old Testament Law today

3. Correlate the principle(s) with NT teaching

- Filter the universal principle through the New Testament teaching
- Some of the Old Testament laws, for example, are restated in the New Testament as commandments for New Testament believers.



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Old Testament Law today

4. Apply Universal principles to life today

- universal principle developed in the previous steps is applied to specific situations in believers' lives today



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Moving from Principle to Public Policy



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From Christian principles to Policy

Apply Universal principles to life today

1. Basic Christian Principles (identified from doctrines that permeate Scripture)
2. an assessment of relevant facts
3. Prudence



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From Christian principles to Policy

1. Basic Christian Principles

- first to the basic Christian doctrine of creation and redemption in which we understand that God created the world good and perfect but it fell into sin. In this, we understand that Jesus Christ and his redemption and the salvation he gives us saves us from despair
- a Christian looks to social solidarity “rooted in Christ’s command to love others as ourselves ... unconcern for others is not a Christian position



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From Christian principles to Policy

1. Basic Christian Principles

- Justice is a basic Christian principle. God's will is that governments order "their actions to promote justice in society."



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From Christian principles to Policy

2. An assessment of relevant facts

These basic principles are not specific enough to answer the question of whether there is a “Christian answer” to a particular public policy issue

The way to address the matter of empirical verification is to “study and research the facts as best we can,” and then combine the result with basic Christian principles.



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From Christian principles to Policy

3. Prudence

This involves “perceptiveness” and “good sense,” asking how Christian principles apply. Here Christian principles and a factual assessment are considered with prayer, to reach a conclusion.



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From Christian principles to Policy

3. Prudence

- We have a policy that is consistent with Christian principles
- We must not be paralyzed by our humility



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Principle vs Policy



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Principles vs Policy

Principle

- general moral position which is applicable to a wide range of situations
- For Christians it represents God's perspective on that wide range of situations
- Derived from the Bible
- Generally Christians should agree at the level of principles. These are derived from the Bible



Principles vs Policy

Apartheid

- Christians should be agreed on the principle that the racially based society to the advantage of the white minority was unfair and wrong in the eyes of God



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Principles vs Policy

Land Issue

- *the principle would be that there needs to be a fairer distribution of land across the population, that it should give people access and opportunity to work, and it should help provide as many people as possible with roots as well as with assets*



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Principles vs Policy

Policies

- *Means to an end*
- *about the mechanisms or government interventions to achieve the end*
- Christians can legitimately disagree about which means are most effective and appropriate
- They can disagree about timing and about priorities



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Reflection and Discussion



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