

# How People Think

## Week 1

- Why think?
- Christian worldview
- Analysis of Christian worldview

## Week 3

- Secular materialism & intolerance

## Week 2

- Existentialism and Post-modernism

## Week 4

- Other religions – Islam, new age

# **How People Think: Week 1**

## The Christian Worldview

# Why and what

- a set of beliefs & assumptions we use when interpreting the world around us.
- Analyse how assumptions affect views:
  - Assisted dying
  - Migrant crisis
  - Delight at getting 'wasted' Saturday night
  - Love of Sunday roast with all the family
  - Discovery of bones on South African cave that seem like a developed ape
  - The news/your favourite film

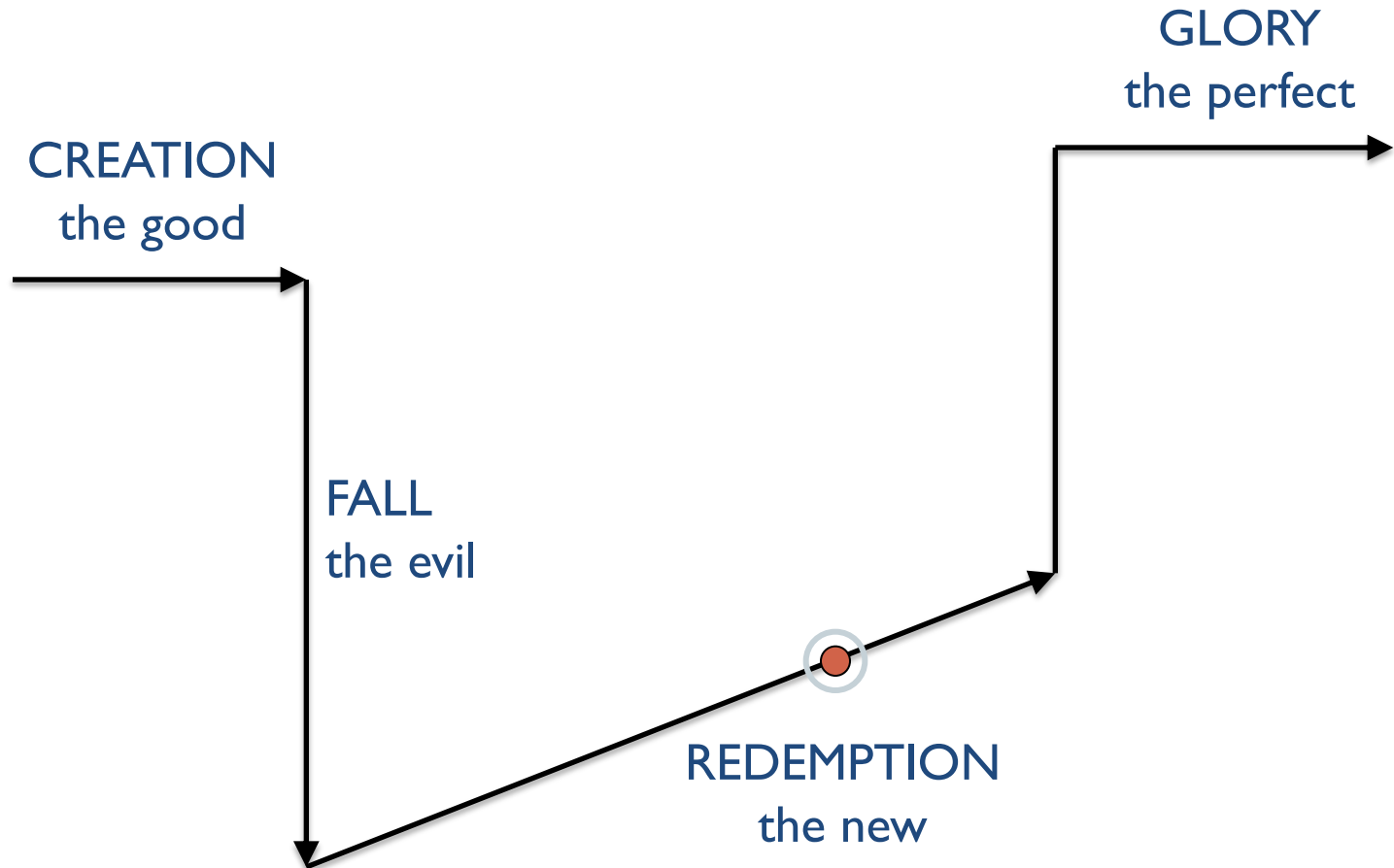
# Theology, thinking, action

- In each case, how do theological themes address the issue?
  - Acts 17:22-31
  - 1 Co 6:1-6
  - 1 Tim 2:1-7
  - 1 Tim 2:8-15
  - Matt 19:1-6
  - Psalm 73:1-28

# The need to think Christianly

- need a Christian outlook that controls our life and our thinking
  - made new in the attitude of our minds (Eph 4:23) with the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16); transformed (Rom 12:2)
  - an outlook controlled by revealed truth
- Helps us
  - Engage and speak the gospel
  - Protect ourselves from wrong thinking
- not a watertight system which answers every question

# A biblical framework for a Christian outlook



# The nature of man from creation

- Man of dust
  - looking downward for self-understanding
  - a biochemical machine
  - an organic living being
- Image of God
  - Looking upward for self-understanding
  - Incomplete self-understanding without knowledge of God
- contrary to pantheism
- contrary to materialism
- true dignity without idolatry

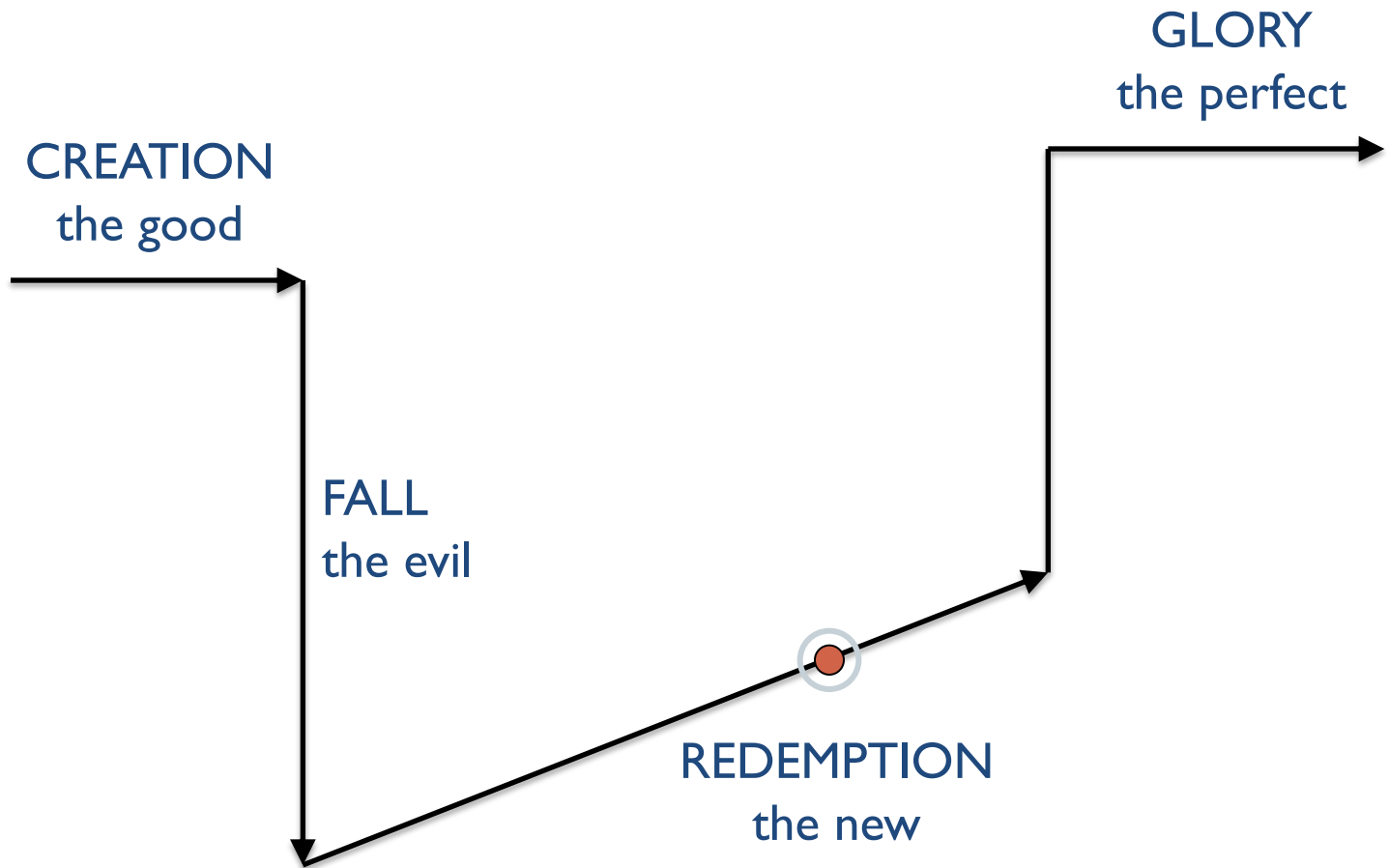
# The position of man in creation

- Dominion
  - a mandate to rule
- Dependence
  - reliant on creation/God
- Responsibility
  - God-given boundaries
  - morally accountable
  - a duty of care
- Relationship
  - God
  - marriage
  - family
  - society



# The activity of man in creation

- Work
  - Sustenance
  - Exploration
  - enjoyment
- Rest
  - restoration
  - appreciation



# The Fall

- Deceived about God's word
  - you will not surely die
- Doubting God's goodness
  - you may not eat from any tree
- Grasping after independence
  - you will be like God
  - a desire for self-rule
- Ruled by desire
  - a slave to sin

# Consequences of the Fall

- Shame and Fear
  - alienation from God and one another
- Excuses and blame-shifting
  - seeking to deflect guilt
- Judgement of God
  - disturbance in human relationships
  - disturbance in the created order
  - suffering and pain
  - anxiety and toil
  - death
- Transmission of sin in an escalating fashion

# Creation graces in a fallen world

- Marriage and society
- Childbirth and family
- The fruitfulness of creation
- Life and Work
- Opposition to evil
- Sufficient grace to point us to God;  
sufficient pain for us to know  
something is wrong

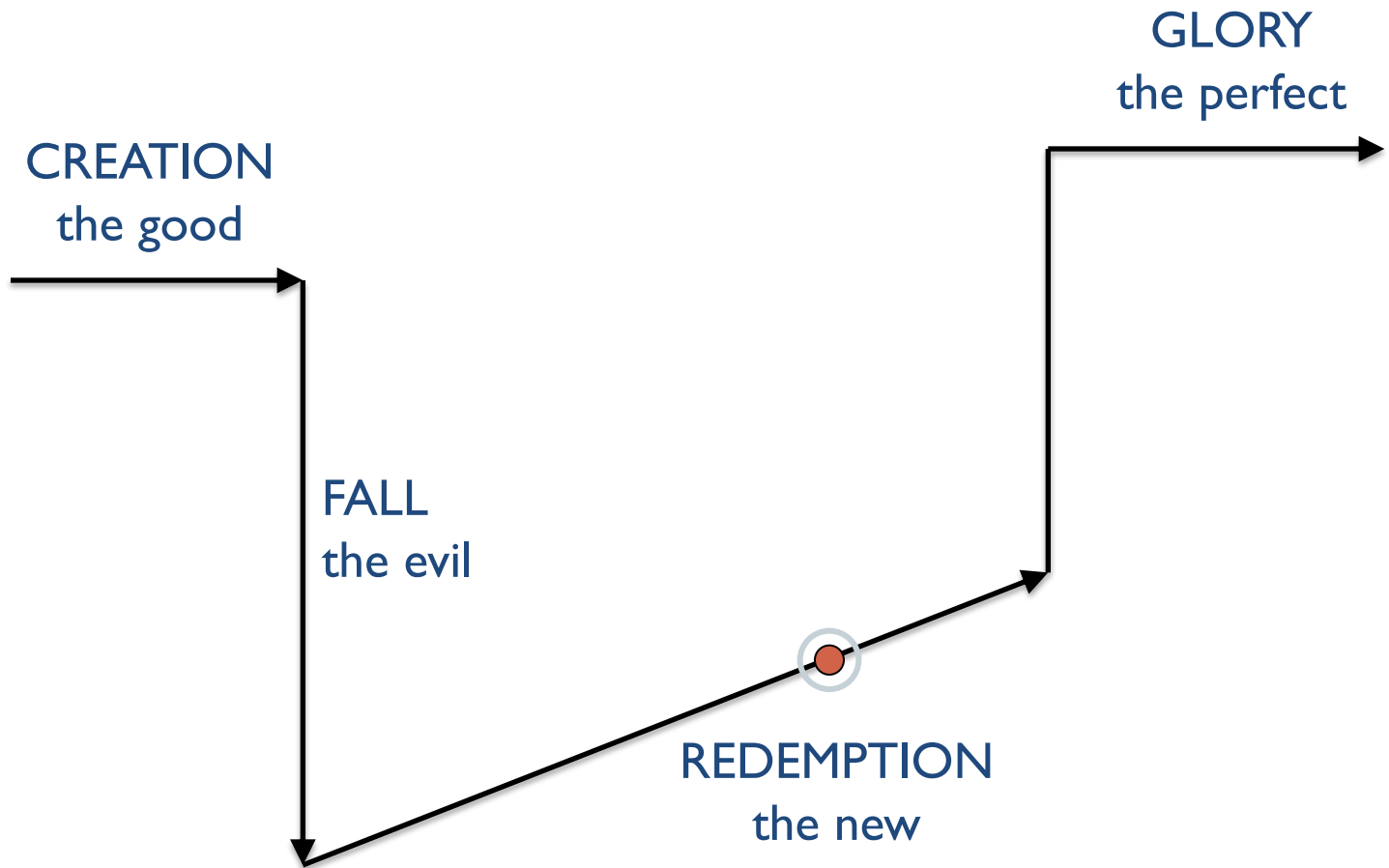
# The Creation/Fall Tension

- Man himself
  - dignity and virtue
  - depravity and ignorance
- Man's relationships
  - desire for society and intimacy
  - alienation, exploitation and conflict
- Man's world
  - fruitfulness and beauty
  - danger and decay
- Man's religious instinct
  - denial and idolatry

See the book of  
Ecclesiastes

# In defence

- Defending Creation
  - Out of nothing, nothing comes
  - Purpose: why is there something, even evolution assumes survival is a valid purpose
  - Fine tuning of the universe
  - Creation of information
  - Personhood: someone cannot be made from something Psalm 94:9
  - Creation and fall seem obvious
- Defending Revelation
  - Reasonableness of gospel
  - Evidence (not proof)





# Redemption

Meaning: deliverance from some evil by the payment of a price

- e.g. prisoners of war released on payment of a *ransom* price
- slaves released by a similar process

Biblically:

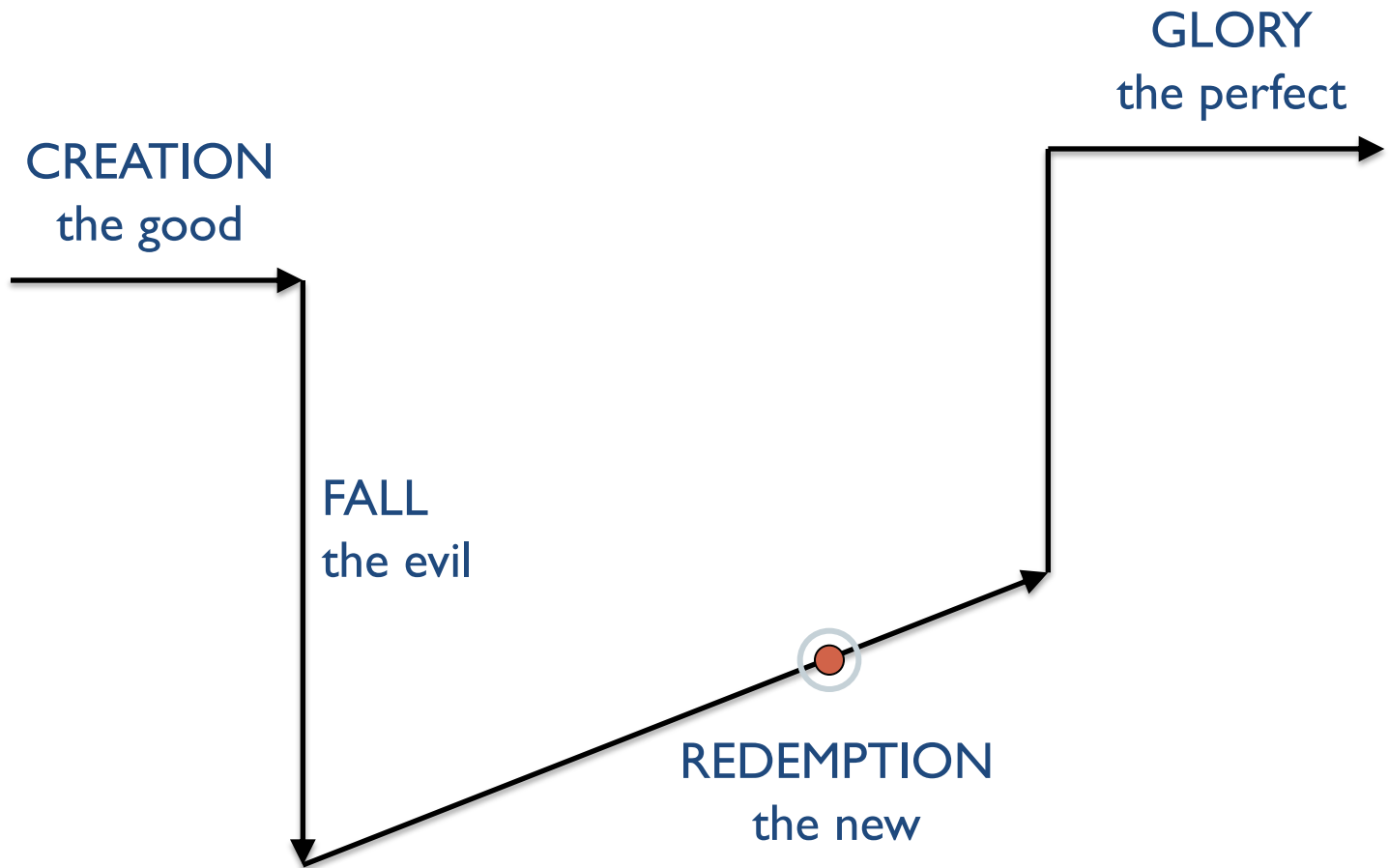
- not deliverance from the body
- not deliverance from the material
- not deliverance from 'nature' into 'grace'
- **deliverance from sin**

# God's plan of redemption

- A plan by which God has already remedied the guilt of sin
  - forgiveness and reconciliation
- A plan that even now counteracts the power of sin
  - regeneration and renewal
- A plan by which God will remedy all the consequences of sin
  - resurrection and new creation

# God's redemption

- Redemption of...
  - persons (Titus 2:14) - present
  - a people (Titus 2:14) - present
  - of our bodies (Rom 8:23) - future
  - of creation (Rom 8:21) – future
- at great cost...
  - the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- Redemption is restoration
  - not disposal and replacement



# Glory – the consummation (Rev 21:1-22:6)

- At the return of Christ...
- A new heaven and a new earth
  - continuity and discontinuity
  - no more sea: chaos, destruction, evil
- A New Jerusalem
  - a city: a social vision; people in community
  - comes down from heaven – not man-made
- The passing away of the old order
  - no more death, mourning, crying or pain
- The second death
  - the exclusion of the unbelieving and the wicked

# Glory – the consummation (Rev 21:1-22:6)

- The marriage of the Lamb
  - greatest intimacy and connectedness between Christ and his church
- A glorious and splendid cube
  - all God's people dwelling in the Most Holy Place
- No temple and no artificial light
  - lit by the unshielded presence of God
- No night
  - nothing to fear

# Glory – the consummation (Rev 21:1-22:6)

- The glory and honour of the nations
  - not the negation but the redemption of human civilization and enterprise
- Nothing impure
  - the glory of the nations without the sin of nations
- The river of life and the tree of life
  - healing all the effects of the fall
  - creation purpose fulfilled
- The throne of God and of the Lamb
  - the hear of it all is the enjoyment of God himself

# Values

- People are fallen but they are not junk
  - unworthy but not worthless
  - Christian love and care
- The body is subject to the curse, but still precious
  - not a prison for the soul to escape (2 Cor 5:1-5)
  - bodily actions matter (1 Cor 6:12-20)
  - care of the body is worthy activity (Christ's healings)
- The material world: broken but still God's good gift
- Hope
  - against meaninglessness, futility and despair
  - there is meaning and a future in Christ



# Spheres of service and endeavour

- The 'religious' life
  - Lived out in the marriage, family, workplace and the world (e.g. Col 3:18-4:1)
  - redeemed to live in a new way within the created order, not freedom from it
- Science
  - The study of God's works (Ps 111:2)
- The arts
  - The flowering of God-given creativity and worthwhile reflection on human life
- Social and political activity
  - attention to the God-given social fabric

# Realism

- People and the social order
  - virtuous and twisted
  - limitations of external forces
  - need for internal regeneration by God's Spirit
  - no heaven on this earth
- The body
  - no perfection of the body before glory
  - readiness for ageing and death
- The earth
  - habitable as long as God wills it
  - subject to decay until made new by God

# Enjoyment of created things

- Good things to be enjoyed (1 Tim 4:1-5)
  - not despising – asceticism
  - avoiding foolish and idolatrous attachment (1 Cor 7:29-31)
- Suffering and glory
  - “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Rom 8:18)

# Questions and Comments

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