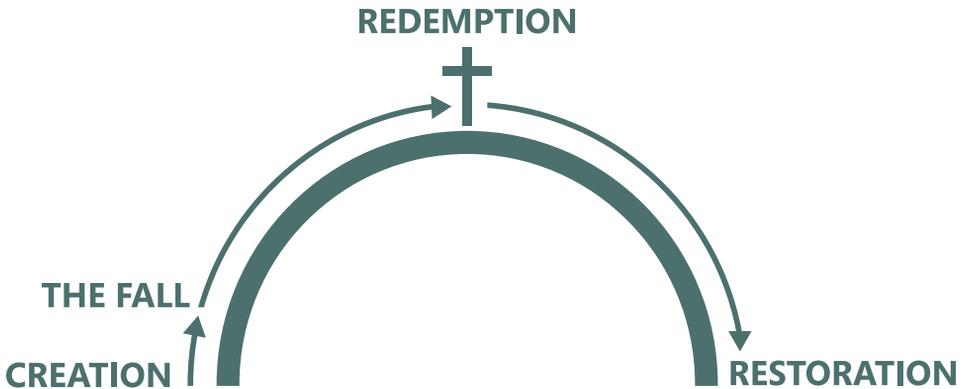


THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE

The Bible is more than a compilation of writings. It is an epic narrative, immersing the reader in the story God is telling through human history – a story of which we are part. The pages of Scripture give us God’s view of reality, flowing from original creation to the recreation of all things. Understanding the narrative from Genesis to Revelation is essential to understanding both God’s revelation of truth to humanity and the trajectory on which that truth sets our lives. God is moving, and he is taking everything somewhere. It is in the biblical scriptures that we find out not only what has happened to this point in history, but also where everything is headed. God will succeed in all he has planned to do, and he invites us to join him in this mission.



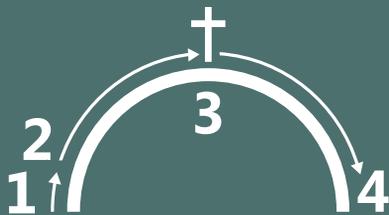
This “Four Chapter” Gospel Narrative provides for us the big headings of human history, helping us to frame a proper understanding of God’s work in the world. We are meant to read our Bibles and to see all of life through this true lens of reality – the one in which God is at work to save people and to renew all things, restoring what is broken through the person of Jesus Christ.

The details of THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE get fleshed out on the back of this card.



PARKCHURCH

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE



1. CREATION

"In the beginning, God..." (Genesis 1:1). The story of the world starts with the Triune God, self-existent and entirely self-sufficient. Out of love and to show forth his glory, God created the spiritual-material cosmos and filled it with human persons to fill and steward the earth, representing their Creator King on the stage of creation. Declaring his creation to be "very good," God's purpose from the beginning was that people would image him through starting families, building societies, and developing cultures. As the early church father Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is man fully alive." The fullness of life and flourishing was meant to be realized as humanity lived in right relationship with their God. (Genesis 1:1-2:25; Revelation 4:11)

2. FALL

But something went terribly wrong. God told the original humans that his Word was good, that listening to him would lead to a flourishing life. Instead of depending upon their Creator and Lord, they rejected his authority, declared independence from him, and rebelled against his call on their lives. We carry this same rebellion in our bones, living out autonomous rejection of his authority in our own lives. This fall from right relationship with God has cosmic consequences, leading to a breakdown in every sphere of the created order. Our fractured existence leaves something deep within us aching for restoration. (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12-21; 8:19-22)

3. REDEMPTION

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14). Thankfully God did not leave us to our own demise. Though we were his enemies – defiant rebels in his kingdom – the Son of God took on human flesh in order to deliver us from our sin and brokenness. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life. This uniquely qualified him to pay the debt sinful humanity owed to God. His sacrificial death on the cross served as the substitute for us, providing a double-transfer: Jesus took on our sin and punishment while we received his perfect righteousness. All this has come as a free gift to those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. Through his work, we are reconciled to God. (Romans 8:21-26; Ephesians 2:1- 10)

4. RESTORATION

Yet that is not the end of the story. Jesus has risen from the dead, declaring victory over sin, Satan, and death itself. The church is now the spiritually resurrected people of God, filled with his Spirit, and meant to carry out the mission of God to every nation, language, and sphere of society. As we anticipate the return of King Jesus to reign and rule forever as well as our bodily resurrection with him, we live as travelers in this world, citizens of a different kingdom. We are being remade into the image of Jesus, representing our God as he originally intended for us. Grounding our hope in the future and comprehensive renewal of all things, we speak, act, and relate in ways that bring foretastes of that restoration to every corner of our lives. (Colossians 1:15-20; Revelation 21:1-5)