



The Kingdom Perspective

An Optimistic Future

Hello, this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

Historical observers have noted that Western civilization has, what we might call, a “progressive” element—it tends to be positive toward the future. There is an assumption in the West that history is going somewhere good—that we expect things to get better and that the best is yet to come. Where does that optimistic spirit come from? Many scholars suggest that it comes from the West marinating in the Christian ethos for so many centuries. Christianity is an optimistic, forward looking, and freedom-loving religion. Unlike many other worldviews, Christianity teaches that the world is heading toward a bright future where all evil will be banished, and the just and merciful reign of Jesus will spread from seas to shining sea. It seems to me that this progressive spirit has borne the fruit of many secular benefits.

Now, to be clear, this is not to say there are not reasons to be negative about the history of the West and the Christians that populated its landscape. Slavery, rapacious colonialism, genocide—to name a few—are all fair critiques. Sin is everywhere and in everyone. Nonetheless, any reasonable reading of history has to note that these negatives are not unique to the West. What’s unique is the progressive spirit that has fought against these evils—in many instances all but eradicating them. These negatives are not caused by the West’s Christian heritage. Rather, a good argument can be made that it is precisely the influence of Christianity that enabled the West to battle them so effectively (to investigate this claim, see, e.g. *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion* by Rebecca McLaughlin, *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* by Tom Holland, Timothy Keller’s chapter in “The Church is Responsible for So Much Injustice” in *The Reason for God, Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home* by Glenn Sunshine, and *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* by Peter Brown).

As Christians we ought to be grateful for this heritage, while at the same time guarding ourselves from any arrogance that might rise from it. We do not worship “progress” and we certainly do not worship “our progress”. Rather, we worship the Prince of Peace—and until His kingdom comes, we will continue to do battle with evil—both from within and from without.

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

Philippians 2 (ESV)

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

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