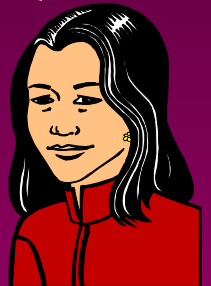


God's Plan for Cultures and Languages

What does the Bible say
about cultures?

For Lansdale Presbyterian Church
Vern Sheridan Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.
Westminster Theological Seminary



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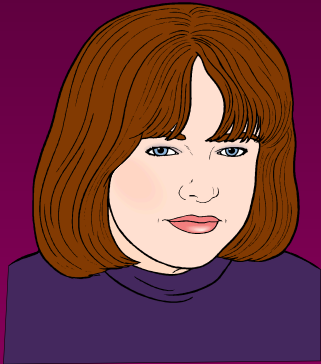
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Challenge: Peace

There is so much hatred and strife between groups! It seems it will never end.



God has a plan.



A. God's Goal

God's Goal

Worthy are you [Christ] to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. --
Rev. 5:9-10

God's Goal (2)

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, --

Rev. 7:9

B. The Problem

Babel

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a power with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." -- Gen. 11:1-4

Babel (2)

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." -- Gen. 11:5-7

Babel (3)

So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth. -- Gen.

11:8-9

Effects of Babel

many languages



dispersing



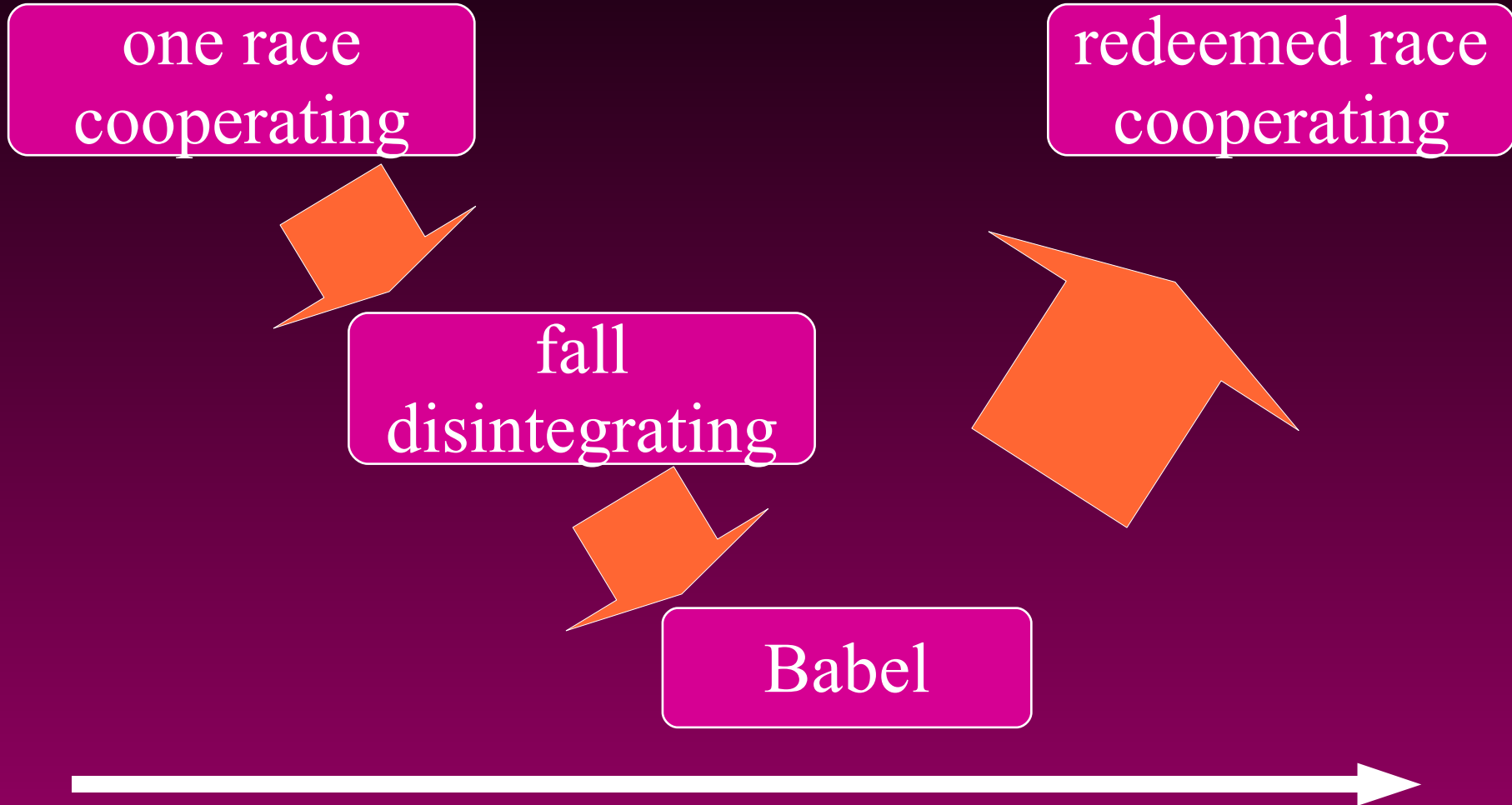
geographical and political
separation



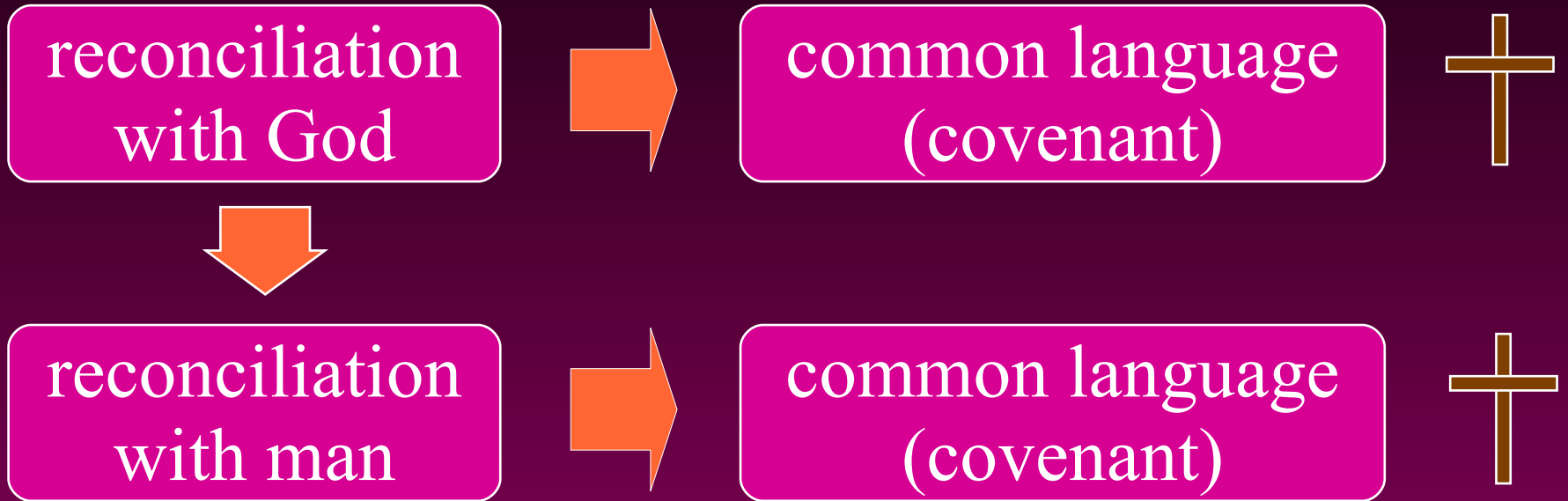
many cultures

C. Promise of Peace

God's Plan for Man



Reconciliation



Promise to All Nations

I will bless those who bless you [Abram],
and him who dishonors you I will curse,
and in you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed. --Gen. 12:3

Promise to All Nations

May all kings fall down before him,
all nations serve him. -- Ps. 72:11

Praise the Lord, all nations!
Extol him, all peoples!
-- Ps. 117:1; see Rom. 15:11

Promise to All Nations (2)

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and peoples shall flow to it,
and many nations shall come, and say:
-- Mic. 4:1-2a

Promise to All Nations (3)

"Come, let us go up to the mountain
of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

-- Mic. 4:2b

Promise to All Nations (4)

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;
but they shall sit every man under his vine
and under his fig tree,
and no one shall make them afraid.

-- Mic. 4:3-4

D. Peace Achieved

Fundamental Peace

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. -- Rom. 5:1

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one -- Eph. 2:14

The Message of Peace

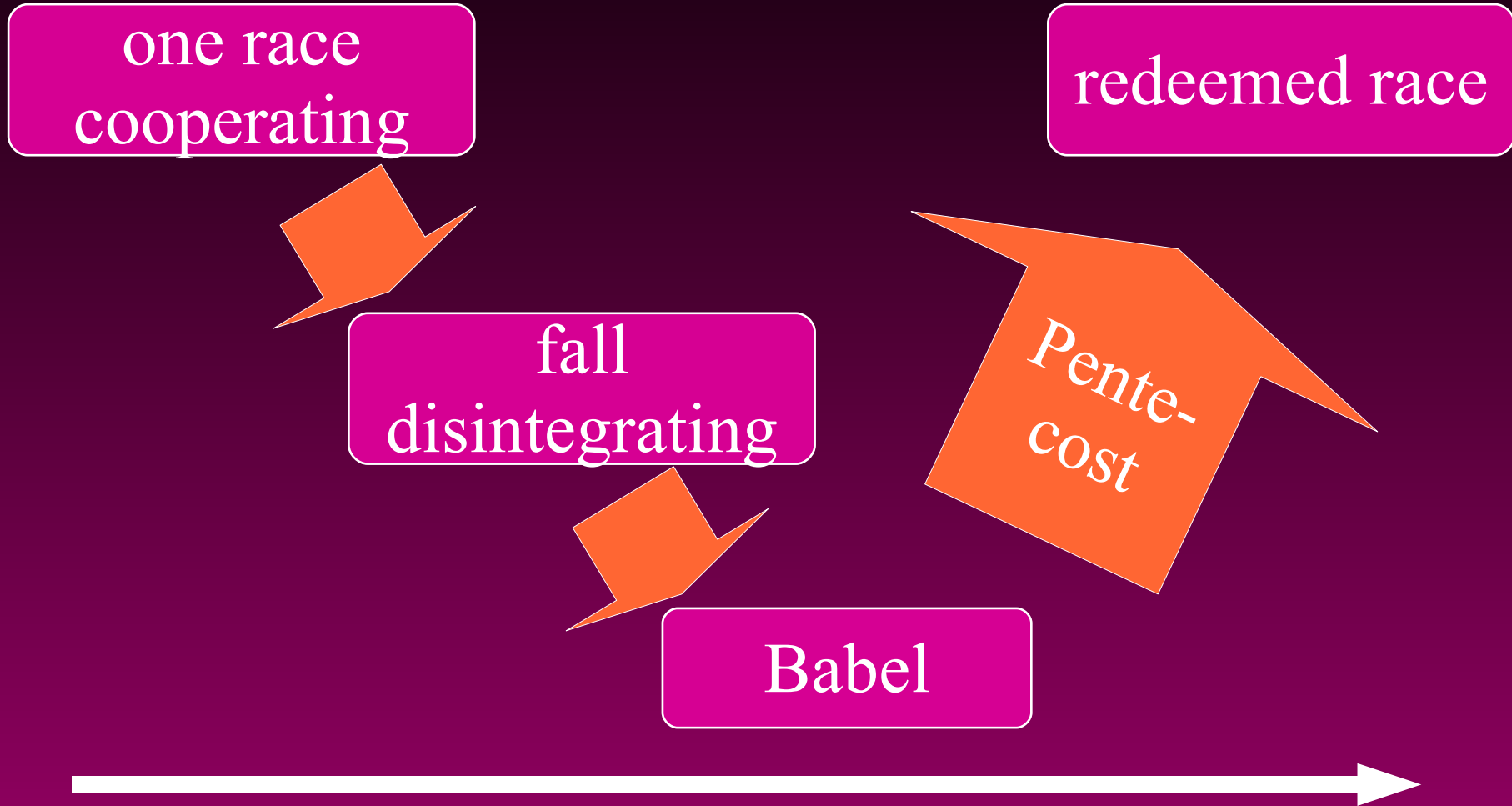
And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. -- Eph. 2:17

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. -- Acts 1:8

Overcoming Language Barriers

And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. -- Acts 2:8-11

Reversal of Babel



The Message of Peace

God the Father

Acts 2:33; Eph. 3:11



Christ the Son

Acts 2:33; Eph. 2:17



The Spirit
of Pentecost

Acts 2:33; 1 Pet . 1:12



apostolic
preaching

1 Thess. 2:13



apostolic
writing

Rom. 1:1; 2

Pet. 3:16;

1 Cor. 14:37-38

The Message of Peace (2)

apostolic writing

1 Cor. 14:37-38;
1 Thess. 5:27

translations

Acts 1:8; Mic. 4:2

copies

reading

1 Tim. 3:13

official
preaching

spreading
the news

Acts 8:4

2 Tim. 4:1-2

E. Peace Worked Out

Gentile and Jew

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. -- Eph. 2:13-16

Unity in Christ

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. -- Eph. 4:1-3

Unity in Christ (2)

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

-- Eph. 4:4-6

Diversity in Christ

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

-- Eph. 4:7

There are many parts, yet one body.

-- 1 Cor. 12:20

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

-- 1 Cor. 12:27

Unity in Diversity

Jews and
Gentile:

ethnic
groups:

one body

one faith

caring

sharing

because of
Christ

distinct customs

distinct cultures

distinct languages

because of
Christ