

Our World Belongs to God

© 1987, CRC Publications, Grand Rapids MI. www.crcna.org. Reprinted with permission.

As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world—which some seek to control, but which others view with despair—we declare with joy and trust: Our world belongs to God!

—*from the Preamble*

[Our World Belongs to God 01-06: Preamble](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 07-13: Creation](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 14-18: The Fall](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 19-23: Redemption](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 24-29: Christ](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 30-33: The Spirit](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 34-36: Scripture](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 37-43: God's New People](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 44-55: The Mission of God's People](#)

[Our World Belongs to God 56-58: New Creation](#)

Preamble

1.

As followers of Jesus Christ, [1]
living in this world—
which some seek to control,
but which others view with despair—[2]
we declare with joy and trust:
Our world belongs to God! [3]

[1 Ps. 103:19-22]

[2 Ps. 4:6]

[3 Ps. 24:1]

2.

From the beginning, [1]
through all the crises of our times,
until his kingdom fully comes, [2]
God keeps covenant forever.
Our world belongs to him! [3]
God is King! Let the earth be glad!
Christ is Victor; his rule has begun. Hallelujah!
The Spirit is at work, renewing the creation. Praise the
Lord!

[1 Ps. 145]

[2 Rom. 11:33-36]

[3 Rev. 4-5]

3.

But rebel cries sound through the world:[1]
some, crushed by failure
or hardened by pain,
give up on life and hope and God;
others, shaken,
but still hoping for human triumph,[2]
work feverishly to realize their dreams.[3]
As believers in God
we join this struggle of the spirits,
testing our times by the Spirit's sure Word.

[1 Ps. 2]

[2 Eph. 6:10-18]

[3 1 John]

4.

Our world has fallen into sin;
but rebellion and sin can never dethrone God.[1]
He does not abandon the work of his hand;
the heavens still declare his glory.
He preserves his world,
sending seasons, sun, and rain,[2]
upholding his creatures,
renewing the earth,
directing all things to their purpose.
He promised a Savior;
now the whole creation groans[3]
in the birth pangs of a new creation.

[1 Ps. 19]

[2 Acts 14:15-17]

[3 Rom. 8:18-25]

5.

God holds this world[1]
in sovereign love.
He kept his promise,
sending Jesus into the world.
He poured out his Spirit[2]
and broadcast the news
that sinners who repent and believe in Jesus[3]
can live
and breathe
and move again
as members of the family of God.

[1 John 3:1-21]

[2 Acts 2]

[3 Acts 17:22-31]

6.

We rejoice in the goodness of God,
renounce the works of darkness,
and dedicate ourselves to holy living.
As covenant partners,
called to faithful obedience, [1]
and set free for joyful praise,
we offer our hearts and lives [2]
to do God's work in his world. [3]
With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended,
we expect the Day of the Lord.
And we are confident
that the light which shines in the present darkness [4]
will fill the earth when Christ appears.

Come, Lord Jesus! [5]
Our world belongs to you.

[1 Mic. 6:8]

[2 Rom. 12:1 -2]

[3 2 Pet. 3]

[4 1 Cor. 15]

[5 Rev. 22:20]

Creation

7.

Our world belongs to God—
not to us or earthly powers, [1]
not to demons, fate, or chance.
The earth is the Lord's!

[1 Deut. 10:12-14]

8.

In the beginning, God—[1]
Father, Word, and Spirit—[2]
called this world into being [3]
out of nothing,
and gave it
shape and order.

[1 Gen. 1]

[2 Ps. 33:1 -11]

[3 Isa. 40]

9.

God formed the land, the sky, and the seas,[1]
making the earth a fitting home
for the plants, animals,[2]
and humans he created.
The world was filled with color, beauty, and variety;
it provided room for
work and play,
worship and service,
love and laughter.
God rested—[3]
and gave us rest.
In the beginning
everything was very good.

[1 Gen. 1-2]

[2 Ps. 104]

[3 Mark 2:27-28]

10.

As God's creatures we are made in his image[1]
to represent him on earth,[2]
and to live in loving communion with him.
By sovereign appointment we are[3]
earthkeepers and caretakers:
loving our neighbor,
tending the creation,
and meeting our needs.
God uses our skills
in the unfolding and well-being of his world.

[1 Gen. 1:26-30]

[2 Ps. 8]

[3 Matt. 22:35-40]

11.

Male and female,[1]
all of us are to represent God[2]
as we do our tasks.
Whether single or married,
we are called to live within God's order[3]
in lives of loving service.

[1 Gen. 1:26-28]

[2 Gal. 3:26-28]

[3 1 Cor. 7]

12.

No matter what our age, or race, or color,[1]
we are the human family together,
for the Creator made us all.
Since life is his gift,
we foster the well-being of others,[2]
protecting the unborn and helpless from harm.[3]

[1 Acts 17:22-31]
[2 Ps. 139]
[3 Lev. 19; 25:35-38]

13.
God directs and bends to his will[1]
all that happens in his world.
As history unfolds in ways we only know in part,[2]
all things—
from crops to grades,
from jobs to laws—
are under his control.
God is present in our world
by his Word and Spirit.
The faithfulness[3]
of our great Provider
gives sense to our days
and hope to our years.
The future is secure,
for our world belongs to God.

[1 Matt. 6:25-34]
[2 Ps. 147, 148]
[3 Ps. 111]

The Fall

14.
Early in human history
our first parents listened to the intruder's voice.[1]
Rather than living by the Creator's
word of life,
they fell for Satan's lie
and sinned!
They forgot their place;
they tried to be like God.
But as sinners they feared
the nearness of God
and hid from him.

[1 Gen. 3]

15.
Apart from grace[1]
we prove each day
that we are guilty sinners.
Fallen in that first sin,
we fail to thank God,
we break his laws,
we ignore our tasks.
Looking for life without God, we find only death;
grasping for freedom outside his law,[2]
we trap ourselves in Satan's snares;
pursuing pleasure, we lose the gift of joy.

[1 Rom. 1:18-3:23; 5:12]
[2 1 John 1:8-10]

16.

When humans no longer show God's image, [1]
all creation suffers.
We abuse the creation or idolize it. [2]
We are estranged from our Creator,
from our neighbor, and from all that God has made.

[1 Rom. 1]
[2 Eph. 4:17-19]

17.

All spheres of life—[1]
marriage and family,
work and worship,
school and state,
our play and art—
bear the wounds of our rebellion. [2]
Sin is present everywhere—[3]
in pride of race,
in arrogance of nations,
in abuse of the weak and helpless,
in disregard for water, air, and soil,
in destruction of living creatures,
in slavery, deceit, terror, and war, [4]
in worship of false gods,
and frantic escape from reality. [5]
We have become victims of our own sin.

[1 Rom. 1]
[2 Ps. 14]
[3 Amos 1-2]
[4 Jer. 17:9]
[5 Isa. 28:7-8]

18.

In all our strivings [1]
to excuse
or save ourselves,
we stand condemned [2]
before the God of Truth.
But our world,
broken and scarred, [3]
still belongs to God.
He holds it together [4]
and gives us hope.

[1 Ps. 89]
[2 Rom. 1:18]
[3 Jer. 14]
[4 Rom. 5:2-5; 15:13]

Redemption

19.

While justly angry[1]
God did not turn his back
on a world bent on destruction;
he turned his face to it in love.[2]
With patience and tender care he set out[3]
on the long road of redemption
to reclaim the lost as his people[4]
and the world as his kingdom.

[1 Gen. 3:9-15]

[2 John 3:16]

[3 Luke 1:68-75; 3:23-37]

[4 Rev. 11:15]

20.

Although Adam and Eve were expelled from the
garden[1]
and their work was burdened by sin's effects,
God held on to them in love.
He promised to crush
the evil forces they unleashed.

[1 Gen. 3:15-19]

21.

When evil filled the earth,[1]
God judged it with a flood,
but rescued Noah and his family[2]
and animals of all kinds.
He covenanted with every creature
that seasons would continue
and that such destruction would not come again
until the final day.

[1 Gen. 6-9]

[2 1 Pet. 3:18-22]

22.

The Creator pledged to be God[1]
to Abraham and his children,
blessing all nations through them
as they lived obediently before him.
He chose Israel as his special people[2]
to show the glory of his name,[3]
the power of his love,[4]
and the wisdom of his ways.
He gave them his laws through Moses,[5]
he led them by rulers and teachers,
so that they would be a people
whose God was king.

[1 Gen. 12:1-3]
[2 Deut. 7]
[3 Rom. 9]
[4 Mic. 6:8]
[5 Ps. 103:7]

23.

When Israel spurned God's love[1]
by lusting after other gods,
by trusting in power and wealth,
and by hurting the weak,
God scattered his people among the nations.
Yet he kept a faithful few[2]
and promised them the Messiah:
a prophet to speak the clear word,
a king to crush the serpent's head,
a priestly servant willing to be broken for sinners.[3]
And he promised the gift of the Spirit[4]
to bend stubborn wills to new obedience.

[1 2 Chron. 36]
[2 Isa. 10]
[3 Isa. 53]
[4 Jer. 11; 31]

Christ

24.

God remembered his promise[1]
to reconcile the world to himself;
he has come among us[2]
in Jesus Christ,
the eternal Word made flesh.[3]
He is the long-awaited Savior,[4]
fully human and fully divine,
conceived by the Spirit of God
and born of the virgin Mary.

[1 2 Cor. 5:18-21]
[2 Gal. 4:4-7]
[3 John 1:1-14]
[4 Luke 1-2]

25.

In the events of his earthly life—[1]
his temptations and suffering,[2]
his teaching and miracles,
his battles with demons and talks with sinners—
Jesus made present in deed and in word
the coming rule of God.

[1 Luke 4]
[2 Phil. 2:1-11]

26.

As the second Adam he chose[1]
the path we had rejected.
As our representative,
serving God perfectly,
and loving even those who scorned him, [2]
Christ showed us how
a righteous child of God lives.

[1 Rom. 5]

[2 1 Pet. 2:21-25]

27.

As our substitute[1]
he suffered all his years on earth,
especially in the horrible torture of the cross.
He carried God's judgment on our sin; [2]
his sacrifice removes our guilt.
He walked out of the grave, the Lord of life!
He conquered sin and death. [3]
We are set right with God,
we are given new life,
and called to walk with him [4]
in freedom from sin's dominion.

[1 Isa. 53]

[2 Heb. 10]

[3 Rom. 4:18-5:11]

[4 Gal. 5]

28.

Being both God and man, [1]
Jesus is the only Mediator
between God and his people.
He alone paid the debt of our sin; [2]
there is no other Savior!
In him the Father chose those [3]
whom he would save.
His electing love sustains our hope:
God's grace is free
to save sinners who offer nothing
but their need for mercy.

[1 1 Tim. 2:5-6]

[2 Acts 4:10-12]

[3 Eph. 1:1-14]

29.

Jesus ascended in triumph [1]
to his heavenly throne. [2]
There he hears our prayers,
pleads our cause before the Father, [3]
and rules the world. [4]
Blessed are all [5]
who take refuge in him.

[1 Acts 1:1 -11]
[2 Eph. 1:18-23]
[3 1 John 2:1 -2]
[4 Rev. 5]
[5 Rom. 8:31 -39]

The Spirit

30.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit[1]
was given to the church.
In pouring his Spirit on many peoples
God overcomes the divisions of Babel; [2]
now people from every tongue, tribe, and nation
are gathered into the unity
of the body of Christ.

[1 Acts 2]
[2 Rev. 7]

31.

Jesus stays with us in the Spirit, [1]
who renews our hearts,
moves us to faith,
leads us in the truth, [2]
stands by us in our need,
and makes our obedience fresh and vibrant.

[1 John 14]
[2 2 Cor. 3:7 -18]

32.

The Spirit thrusts [1]
God's people into worldwide mission.
He impels young and old, [2]
men and women,
to go next door and far away [3]
into science and art,
media and marketplace
with the good news of God's grace.
The Spirit goes before them and with them, [4]
convincing the world of sin
and pleading the cause of Christ.

[1 Matt. 28:18-20]
[2 Matt. 9:35 -38]
[3 Luke 14:15 -24]
[4 John 16:5 -15]

33.

The Spirit's gifts are here to stay[1]
in rich variety —
fitting responses to timely needs.
We thankfully see each other
as gifted members of the fellowship[2]
which delights in the creative Spirit's work.
He gives more than enough
to each believer
for God's praise and our neighbor's welfare. [3]

[1 1 Cor. 12-14]

[2 Eph. 4]

[3 Rom. 12]

Scripture

34.

God has not left this world[1]
without ways of knowing him.
He shows his power and majesty
in the creation;
he has mercifully spoken
through prophets, history writers, poets,[2]
gospel writers, and apostles—
and most clearly through the Son.
The Spirit who moved humans[3]
to write the Word of God[4]
speaks to us in the Bible.

[1 Rom. 1]

[2 Heb. 1]

[3 2 Tim. 3:14-17]

[4 2 Pet. 1:12-21]

35.

The Bible is the Word of God,
record and tool of his redeeming work.
It is the Word of Truth,[1]
fully reliable in leading us[2]
to know God
and have life[3]
in Jesus Christ.

[1 James 1:18]

[2 Acts 8:26-39]

[3 John 20:30-31]

36.

The Bible tells God's mighty acts[1]
in the unfolding of covenant history.[2]
It is one revelation in two Testaments,
which shows a single plan of salvation,
and reveals God's will infallibly.
As God's people hear the Word and do it,[3]
they are equipped for discipleship,
to witness to the good news:
Our world belongs to God
and he loves it deeply.

[1 Acts 7]

[2 1 Cor. 10:1-11]

[3 2 Tim. 3:14-17]

God's New People*

*Eph. 1-4

37.

In our world, bent under the weight of sin,
Christ gathers a new community.[1]
Satan and his evil forces
seek whom they may confuse and swallow;[2]
but Jesus builds his church,[3]
his Spirit guides,
and grace abounds.

[1 1 Pet. 5:8-11]

[2 1 Cor. 3:10-17]

[3 Matt. 16:13-19]

38.

The church is the fellowship of those[1]
who confess Jesus as Lord.
She is the Bride of Christ,
his chosen partner,[2]
loved by Jesus and loving him:[3]
delighting in his presence,
seeking him in prayer,[4]
silent before the mystery of his love.

[1 Rev. 21:9]

[2 1 Pet. 2:4-10]

[3 Eph. 2]

[4 Col. 1:1-23; 3:1-17]

39.

Our new life in Christ[1]
is celebrated and nourished
in the fellowship of congregations[2]
where God's name is praised,
his Word proclaimed,[3]
his way taught;
where sins are confessed,[4]
prayers and gifts are offered,[5]
and sacraments are celebrated.

[1 Acts 2:41-47]

[2 Eph. 4:1-5:20]

[3 Rom. 10]

[4 Eph. 3:1-13]

[5 Matt. 6:5-15]

40.

God meets us in the sacraments,[1]
holy acts in which his deeds[2]
elicit our response.
God reminds and assures us in baptism,[3]
whether of those newly born or newly converted,[4]
that his covenant love saves us,
that he washes away our guilt,[5]
gives us the Spirit,
and expects our love in return.
In the supper our Lord offers[6]
the bread and cup to believers
to guarantee our share
in his death and resurrection,
and to unite us to him[7]
and to each other.
We take this food gladly,[8]
announcing as we eat
that Jesus is our life
and that he shall come again[9]
to call us to the Supper of the Lamb.

[1 Gen. 17]

[2 Ex. 12]

[3 Matt. 28:18-20]

[4 Acts 2:37-41]

[5 Col. 2:9-14]

[6 Matt. 26:26-29]

[7 1 Cor. 10:16-17]

[8 1 Cor. 11:17-34]

[9 Rev. 19:6-9]

41.

The Spirit empowers each member[1]
to take part in the ministry of all,
so that hurts are healed
and all may rejoice[2]
in the life and growth of the fellowship.

[1 1 Cor. 12-13]
[2 1 Cor. 1:1 -9]

42.

The church is a gathering[1]
of forgiven sinners,
called to be holy,[2]
dedicated to service.
Saved by the patient grace of God,[3]
we deal patiently with others.
Knowing our own weakness and failures,
we bring good news to all sinners
with understanding of their condition,
and with hope in God.

[1 Eph. 2]
[2 1 Pet. 1]
[3 Matt. 5:43-48]

43.

We grieve that the church[1]
which shares one Spirit, one faith, one hope,
and spans all time, place, race, and language[2]
has become a broken communion in a broken world.
When we struggle for the purity of the church
and for the righteousness God demands,
we pray for saintly courage.
When our pride or blindness blocks
the unity of God's household,
we seek forgiveness.
We marvel that the Lord gathers the broken pieces[3]
to do his work,
and that he blesses us still
with joy, new members,
and surprising evidences of unity.
We commit ourselves to seeking and expressing
the oneness of all who follow Jesus.

[1 Eph. 4]
[2 Gal. 3:26-29]
[3 John 17]

The Missions of God's People

44.

Following the apostles, the church is sent—[1]
sent with the gospel of the kingdom[2]
to make disciples of all nations,
to feed the hungry,[3]
and to proclaim the assurance that in the name of Christ[4]
there is forgiveness of sin and new life
for all who repent and believe—
to tell the news that our world belongs to God.
In a world estranged from God,
where millions face confusing choices,
this mission is central to our being,[5]
for we announce the one name that saves.
We repent of leaving this work to a few,
we pray for brothers and sisters
who suffer for the faith,
and we rejoice that the Spirit[6]
is waking us to see
our mission in God's world.

[1 Matt. 28:18-20]

[2 John 20:21-23]

[3 1 John 3:11-24]

[4 2 Cor. 5:11-6:2]

[5 Acts 1:8]

[6 1 Thess. 1]

45.

The rule of Jesus Christ covers the whole world.[1]
To follow this Lord is
to serve him everywhere,[2]
without fitting in,
as light in the darkness,[3]
as salt in a spoiling world.

[1 Phil. 2:1-10; 4:8-9]

[2 Rom. 12]

[3 Matt. 5:13-16]

46.

We serve Christ by thankfully receiving our life[1]
as a gift from his hand.
We protest and resist
all abuse and harm of this gift[2]
by abortion, pollution, gluttony,
addiction, and all foolish risks.

[1 1 Cor. 6:19-20]

[2 Ps. 139]

47.

Since God made us male and female in his image,[1]
one sex may not look down on the other,
nor should we flaunt or exploit our sexuality.
Our roles as men and women must conform[2]
to God's gifts and commands[3]
as we shape our cultural patterns.
Sexuality is disordered in our fallen world;[4]
grief and loneliness are the result;[5]
but Christ's renewing work gives hope
for order and healing
and surrounds suffering persons[6]
with a compassionate community.

[1 Gen. 1:26-2:25]

[2 Song of Songs]

[3 Gal. 3:28]

[4 Prov. 7]

[5 1 Cor. 6:9-20]

[6 John 8:1-11]

48.

We serve Christ as singles,[1]
whether for a time or a life,
by undivided devotion to the work of God
and so add our love and service
to the building of his kingdom.

[1 1 Cor. 7:25-35]

49.

In marriage and family,[1]
we serve God
by reflecting his covenant love
in life-long loyalty,
and by teaching his ways,
so that children may know Jesus as their Lord
and learn to use their gifts in a life of joyful service.

[1 Eph. 5:1-6:4]

50.

In education we seek to acknowledge the Lord[1]
by promoting schools and teaching[2]
in which the light of his Word shines in all learning.[3]
where students, of whatever ability,
are treated as persons who bear God's image[4]
and have a place in his plan.

[1 Prov. 4; 9:10]

[2 Ps. 119:105]

[3 Col. 1:17]

[4 Deut. 6:1-9]

51.

In our work, even in dull routine, [1]
we hear the call to serve our Lord.
We must work for more than wages, [2]
and manage for more than profit, [3]
so that mutual respect
and the just use of goods and skills [4]
may shape the work place,
and so that, while we earn or profit,
useful products and services may result.
Rest and leisure are gifts of God [5]
to relax us and to set us free
to discover and to explore.
Believing that he provides for us,
we can rest more trustingly [6]
and entertain ourselves more simply.

[1 Eph. 4:17-32]

[2 2 Thess. 3:6-13]

[3 Eph. 6:5-9]

[4 1 Thess. 4:9-12]

[5 Phil. 4:8]

[6 Heb. 4:1-13]

52.

Grateful for the advances
in science and technology, [1]
we make careful use of their products, [2]
on guard against idolatry
and harmful research,
and careful to use them in ways that answer [3]
to God's demands
to love our neighbor
and to care for the earth and its creatures. [4]

[1 Gen. 1:28-31; 9:1-7]

[2 1 Chron. 29:1-19]

[3 1 Tim. 4:1-5]

[4 Rom. 8:19-23]

53.

Since God establishes the powers that rule, [1]
we are called to respect them, [2]
unless they trample his Word.
We are to obey God in politics, [3]
pray for our rulers,
and help governments to know his will for public life.
Knowing that God's people
live under many forms of government,
we are thankful for the freedoms [4]
enjoyed by citizens of many lands;
we grieve with those who live under oppression, [5]
and we work for their liberty [6]
to live without fear.

[1 John 19:11]
[2 Rom. 13:1-7]
[3 Acts 4]
[4 Isa. 61:1-2]
[5 Gen. 18]
[6 Rom. 6:16-19]

54.

We call on governments to do public justice[1]
and to protect the freedoms and rights[1]
of individuals, groups, and institutions,[3]
so that each may freely do[4]
the tasks God gives.
We urge governments to ensure the well-being of all citizens[5]
by protecting children from abuse and pornography,[6]
by guarding the elderly and poor,[7]
and by promoting the freedom to speak, to work,[8]
to worship, and to associate.

[1 Matt. 5:6]
[2 Isa. 61:8]
[3 Luke 4:17-21]
[4 1 Tim. 2:1-4]
[5 Ps. 72]
[6 Isa. 1:16-17]
[7 Lev. 19:13-16]
[8 Jer. 9:23-24; 22:15-17]

55.

Following the Prince of Peace,[1]
we are called to be peacemakers,
and to promote harmony and order.
We call on our governments to work for peace;[2]
we deplore the arms race[3]
and the horrors that we risk.
We call on all nations to limit their weapons
to those needed in the defense of justice and freedom.
We pledge to walk in ways of peace,[4]
confessing that our world belongs to God;
he is our sure defense.

[1 James 3:18]
[2 Mic. 4:1-5]
[3 Matt. 26:52]
[4 Matt. 5:9]

New Creation

56.

Our hope for a new earth is not tied[1]
to what humans can do,[2]
for we believe that one day[3]
every challenge to God's rule
and every resistance to his will shall be crushed.
Then his kingdom shall come fully,[4]
and our Lord shall rule forever.

[1 1 Pet. 1:3 -12]

[2 2 Pet. 3:1 -13]

[3 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11]

[4 Rev. 11:15]

57.

We long for that day[1]
when Jesus will return as triumphant king,
when the dead will be raised[2]
and all people will stand before his judgment.[3]
We face that day without fear,
for the Judge is our Savior.
Our daily lives of service aim for the moment[4]
when the Son will present his people to the Father.
Then God will be shown to be true, holy, and gracious.
All who have been on the Lord's side[5]
will be honored,
the fruit of even small acts of[6]
obedience will be displayed;
but tyrants and oppressors,
heretics, and all who deny the Lord
will be damned.

[1 Rev. 20:11-21:8]

[2 1 Cor. 15]

[3 John 5:28-29]

[4 2 Thess. 1:5 -10]

[5 2 Cor. 5:10]

[6 Matt. 25:31 -46]

58.

With the whole creation[1]
we wait for the purifying fire of judgment.
For then we will see the Lord face to face.[2]
He will heal our hurts,
end our wars,
and make the crooked straight.
Then we will join in the new song
to the Lamb without blemish[3]
who made us a kingdom and priests.[4]
God will be all in all,
righteousness and peace will flourish,[5]
everything will be made new,
and every eye will see at last
that our world belongs to God!
Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus.[6]

[1 Rom. 8:18-39]

[2 Rev. 21-22]

[3 Rev. 5]

[4 1 Cor. 15:28]

[5 Isa. 11:6-9; 60:11, 19-20; 65:17-25]

[6 Rev. 22:17, 20]