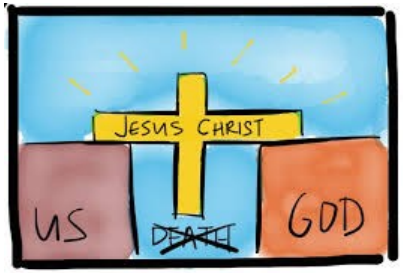
And as a spiritual malady, sin cannot be detected by ordinary natural means i.e. by science based medicine. Worse yet, because sin afflicts everyone, it seems not to exist at all - from a human perspective, it is invisible to us. That's why we need a spiritual diagnosis, which is exactly what God gives us in the Bible!

God tells us that every person is a sinner and subject to His just condemnation because we have each rebelled against Him. As God, He has the right to impose obligations on His creatures. We now possess a sin nature and so we all commit acts of sin: regularly violating God's moral law and the order which He has established in His world. As a result, we become plagued with guilt. "Everyone is in the same boat" - we all live in bondage to our common sin nature. Our physical life on earth is like a probation. At death, if we remain in the grip of sin, God warns us that He will judge us with perfect righteousness for our sin-fueled rebellion against Him and condemn the guilty to the punishment of hell for all eternity! One day we guilty sinners will stand before God, the ultimate and perfect judge! Worse yet, in bondage to sin, there is nothing we can do to change our situation i.e. good works, religion, lifestyle, philosophy, money etc., cannot fix our problem. Since Adam and Eve, all humanity is lost in the vice-grip of sin, physically alive but spiritually dead. There is no human solution to this problem!

God's Solution is Jesus Christ

However, God has provided the only solution for mankind's predicament: His Son, Jesus the Christ. By His sinless life of obedience, Jesus fully met God's righteous requirements for mankind; and by His death on the cross, He paid the penalty for the sins of all God's people. Christ's life and death were substitutionary - He lived and died in the place of all who acknowledge and accept Jesus as God's solution to their sin problem. It is only through Jesus, God's merciful and gracious solution to the human sin problem, that anyone can escape their guilt and God's justified condemnation of them, to get right with God. And even then, God provides the faith required to believe this gospel hope as His gift. Redemption is all of God. We contribute *nothing* to our salvation.



"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me' " (John 14:6 NLT).

A New Heart in Jesus Christ

In the first part of the Bible (Old Testament), God promised that when His redeemer (Messiah, Christ) came, God would give to those who embraced His redeemer a new heart i.e. God would transform His now fallen human creatures internally and give them a brand new internal spiritual nature. Rather than remaining in bondage to their sin nature, and to Satan and the world system, God would radically change His people by means of His word and Spirit, enabling them to live in a way that they could now please God and experience the abundant life that Adam and Even lost when mankind fell into sin. The old sinful nature that invisibly controls us would be replaced by a new spiritual nature. God would give us a new desire for Him.

In Christ alone, God offers forgiveness of sin, the removal of guilt, and the power of God's Holy Spirit living within each new believer, enabling them to become the people God calls us to be: His righteous sons and daughters clothed in Christ's righteousness, who will live in His Holy presence forever.

Contact
info@covenantbiblechurch.net

Mankind's



Greatest Problem

Background

What is mankind's greatest problem? A recent internet search answered this question in different ways. Some were unique and closely aligned to the interest of the agency answering the question. Others listed several common elements, as in this diagram from Springer Link:



NZ's Greatest Problem

Chat GPT listed the top ten issues in NZ as:

1. Housing Affordability and Homelessness
2. Climate Change and Environmental Conservation
3. Income Inequality
4. Healthcare Access and Mental Health
5. Maori Rights and Reconciliation
6. Education Quality and Access
7. Infrastructure Development
8. Immigration and Integration
9. Rural Development
10. Governance and Transparency

Politicians love to focus on such issues, but often with different priorities/emphases. In NZ each party generates policies based on such issues, in an attempt to persuade the electorate at large to support its particular vision of progress going forward, each convinced that they have the solution and people to deliver what they promise.

Other Responses

Some other responses addressed issues at a high level. Here is one example of such an approach:

1. *Economics* - meeting material and social needs
2. *Existential* - living wisely, agreeably and well

The answers just discussed reflect the prevailing secular/naturalistic worldview that is popular in much of the western world: a worldview which focusses on the natural physical realm, but which completely ignores any possibility of a supernatural realm! In NZ today, most people build their lives on a naturalistic foundation, believing that their education has taught the truth about reality. To them, the idea of moral absolutes or a supernatural realm is archaic and redundant: long ago banished to the arena of myth/legend. Science has supplanted the latter, greatly increasing our knowledge of the natural



world and thus our ability to control and manipulate its resources. But while it is true modern technological advancements have made life *easier* for many, it remains questionable whether it has made life *better*! If this were so, surely there would be fewer problems, rather than more! Yet in NZ mental health, suicide, crime etc., have become rampant.

Bible Worldview

The worldview of the Bible reveals the truth that God, the Creator/Sustainer of the universe, communicates to human beings: His image-bearing creatures. Without diminishing the problems already referenced above, the Bible indicates that mankind's greatest problem lies elsewhere i.e. in the *spiritual* or *supernatural* realm. Until this foundational problem is addressed, the other humanly derived natural realm



solutions to the various problems will do little more than apply a bandaid to a serious wound i.e. they might give some temporary external pain relief but they *do not deal* with the internal core human problem that affects us all, which is the source of all the other external and peripheral problems!

What is *the* Problem?

God says that all people are afflicted with a terminal *spiritual* condition that the Bible calls "sin." In the beginning God designed and made humans to reflect His good and righteous moral character, finding true life in a personal, spiritually based, fulfilling relationship with their Holy Creator - under whose authority they were to live in obedient submission to God's word and overarching kingship. God did not make us as robots to automatically love and obey Him; He created us as free moral agents with rationality - the ability to think and to decide. God placed mankind in a perfect, paradise setting, in which they initially experienced harmony with God, each other and their environment. But in Eden our first parents were seduced by Satan into disobeying God and usurping His authority. God viewed this quest for autonomy and independence as cosmic treason, and imposed upon His pride-filled, rebellious creatures the various penal sanctions He had previously threatened. Adam and Eve, along with every one of their descendants, lost God's paradise and now live instead in a broken/cursed world, under a triad of alternate masters: a) Satan; b) the world system he currently rules; c) our own sinful, selfish desires. Though made by God for an abundant life in God's presence, we are now alienated from God by sin.



"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:23 NLT).