

School of Theology



Technology

Part 1 - The Bible Story of Technology

Sunday 2 March 2025



Introduction

Questions

What do you think about when you hear the word 'Technology'? How might you define it?



Can you think of any stories of Technology in the bible?

Do you think a Christian should be happy or sad about Technology?

If you own a smartphone, what's your current screen time over the last few days? (To find this, go into settings -> Digital Wellbeing & Parental Controls -> Activity details)

What are we talking about?

Definitions

*the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry.*¹

*'the systematic application of knowledge, methods, and tools to various practical tasks.'*²

*'Amplified power'*³

Why are we talking about it?

*'Now that we can control our environments with technology, we don't need the ancient religions..... technology becomes the culture's new religion'*³

'Nowadays, the most interesting place in the world from a religious perspective is not Syria or the Bible Belt, but Silicon Valley. That is where hi-tech gurus are brewing for us amazing new religions that have little to do with God, and everything to do with technology. They promise all the old prizes – happiness, peace, justice and eternal life in paradise – but here on Earth with the help of technology, rather than after death and with the help of supernatural beings.'⁴

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2 NIV)

What do we hope to achieve?

1. Hear God's **view** of Technology
2. Think about our **use** of Technology

¹ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/technology>

² 'Modern Technology and the Human Future', *Graig M. Gay*

³ 'God Technology and the Christian Life', *Tony Reinke*

⁴ <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2016/09/salvation-by-algorithm-god-technology-and-the-new-21st-century-religions>, *Yuval Noah Harari*

Tech-Stories (Babel and the Basket)

They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."
(Gen. 11:3-4 NIV)



When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.

(Exodus 2:2-3)



What material is used in both stories? How is it used differently?

What are the different reasons the technology is used?

What is God's view on how the technology is used?

What other stories in the bible are connected to this one?

Who wrote this?

To achieve our aims in this series will need to:

1. Be aware that all technology is created and exists within a story.
2. Know we use it as part of a story.

Overview

Week 1: The Bible's Story of Technology (2 March)

Finding key principles by following Technology through the bible story line from creation to consummation.



Week 2 – The Christian Story with Technology (9 March)

Reflecting on a Christian's (our) view and use of Technology



Week 3 – A Specific Story of Technology (16 March)

Considering a specific case study of smartphone technology. Its costs/curses + blessings/benefits



Hi-Tech Slido Question Box

We are aware how some modern technology is really good at holding our attention, at times to levels of distraction. So to help in this series, we'd love you to write questions you have thought of during the talks in this box. Then add them to Slido in the break.



- **God-Made Patterns/Patents**

*26 His God instructs him
and teaches him the right way.*

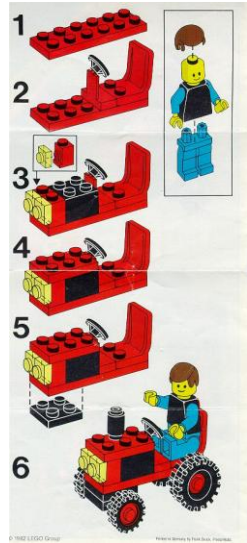
*27 Caraway is not threshed with a sledge,
nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin;
caraway is beaten out with a rod,
and cumin with a stick.*

*28 Grain must be ground to make bread;
so one does not go on threshing it forever.
The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled
over it,*

but one does not use horses to grind grain.

*29 All this also comes from the LORD Almighty,
whose plan is wonderful,
whose wisdom is magnificent.*

(Isaiah 28:26-29)



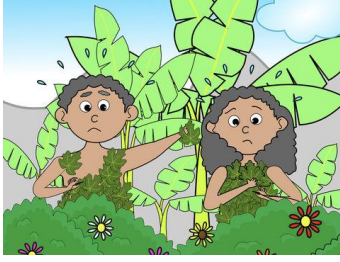
What should be our first reaction when we take our smartphone out of our pocket, or put petrol in the car?

(b) Rebellion (Apple)

- **Man-made Rejection (or a Man-attempted Rise)**



“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:4-5)



- **God-given Clothing Techniques**

‘...and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves... The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.’ (Gen. 3:7,21)

- **Man-made Futility and Death**

...Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. (Gen. 3:17)



[Speaking about Gen. 4:20-24 page 5]

“The immediate conversion of metal-working to weapon-making is ominous. Cain’s family is a microcosm. Its pattern of technical prowess and moral failure is the story of humanity.”⁵

Mini question: Think of some technological gifts that we’ve been given that push back the effects of the fall?


Tech-trends: towards becoming a ‘god’

*Half of the wood he burns in the fire;
over it he prepares his meal,
he roasts his meat and eats his fill.
He also warms himself and says,
‘Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.’*



⁵ ‘Genesis’, Derek Kidner, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*

*From the rest he makes a god, his idol;
he bows down to it and worships.
He prays to it and says,
‘Save me! You are my god!’ (Isaiah 44:16-20)*

<p>How does this bit of technology (or others) have these god-like qualities?</p>	
<p>Omnipresent (everywhere)</p>	
<p>Omniscient (all-knowing)</p>	
<p>Omnipotent (all-powerful)</p>	

What do you think the outcome will be when we take something that is very god-like and put it in the hands of someone who wants to be God?⁶

Tech-trends: towards man-made greed

A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. (Acts 19:24-25)

Mini question: *Do you think Christians are likely to be on the cutting edge of Tech development? Why, why not?*

⁶ A Student’s Guid to Technology, *John Perritt*

(c) Salvation (Better Technology)

- **God becomes man (not man becomes 'god')**

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building.

(Gen. 11:5)



The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

(John 1:14)



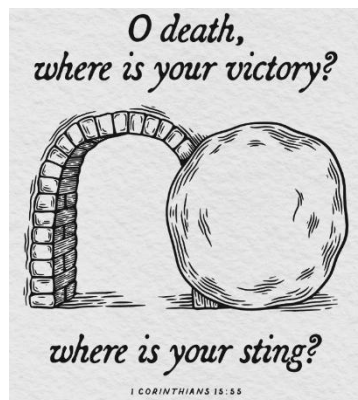
- **The Cross: Man-made technology to sin, becomes a God-planned sacrifice to save**

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

(Matt. 27:23)

- **God solves death by dying and rising (Technology is late to the party)**

Yes, the attitude now towards disease and old age and death is that they are basically technical problems.⁷



⁷ https://www.edge.org/conversation/youva_noah_harari-daniel_kahneman-death-is-optional

- **God offers a true humanity upgrade (Adam 2.0)**

...For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!
(Rom. 5:15)



Mini Question: What parts of this story of salvation do you think would be most appealing to a Tech-loving friend?

Tech-trends: towards being used by believers for God's work



Bible ref. (page no.)	What's the technology	How is it used for God?
1 Samuel 17:45, 48-50 (p289)		
Habakkuk 2:2 (p941)		
2 Thessalonians 3:17 (p1190)		
Bonus – Your own bible reference?		
Bonus – Other technologies outside the bible?		



(d) Consummation (Babel and the Basket)

- **Man-made Tech-tropolis destroyed**

21 Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

*“With such violence
the great city of Babylon will be thrown down,
never to be found again.*

*22 The music of harpists and musicians, pipers and trumpeters,
will never be heard in you again.*

*No worker of any trade
will ever be found in you again.
The sound of a millstone
will never be heard in you again.*

*23 The light of a lamp
will never shine in you again.*

*The voice of bridegroom and bride
will never be heard in you again.*

Your merchants were the world’s important people.

By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.

*24 In her was found the blood of prophets and of God’s holy people,
of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”*

(Rev. 18:21-24)



- **God-made dwelling arrives**

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.



2. Conclusions?

Try and summarise what we've seen about technology in one sentence or one picture?

Tony Reinke Summary:

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. (Ps. 20:7)*
