

Colossians 1:15-17

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[0 : 00] Is to basically go from Genesis to Revelation in an overview.! And my hope is that we can really see the magnificence of God's creation. and what His plan of redemption is, and really how we fit into that.

So, to begin with, I'd like to read out of Colossians 1, starting in verse 15. And read that. It says, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

For everything was created by Him in heaven on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through Him and for Him.

He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together. Lord, I pray that today, as we study Your Word, Lord, that we would gain a better understanding of who You are, that we may glimpse at how big and how holy You are.

Thank You for Your Word, and I pray that today, You would speak through Your Word, and speak through me. Lord, may You open ears and hearts, and open my mouth to speak.

[1 : 10] I pray this in Your name. Amen. As we begin in Genesis chapter 1, it doesn't take long to get to the first verse. It says, In the beginning, God.

And that is the foundation from which we have to start, is that before time, before creation, that God existed, He is infinite, He is holy, and that He has created us, therefore we've started as His creation.

We have to start from that point, that He is the Creator, and that we are creation. Let's see. God created time, and space, and matter, and He created the earth, and humans.

And so when we see God creating man, it says that He created man in His own image. And there's a lot packed into that, because what that means is that man is spiritual.

Man has a spirit, and is able to interact, and to have a relationship with God. As we look in the beginning in Genesis, that Adam was placed into the Garden of Eden, that God was physically with Adam, walking in the garden with him, that God gave him a mandate.

[2 : 24] He gave him the mandate to care for the garden, and to take care of it, and to work in it. He also told Adam to name the animals.

And so we see that there's this relationship between God and Adam. It's unhindered. There's joy there. There's peace on the earth.

And that's where we started. That's what the creation was created as. It is holy, and full of joy.

There's no sadness, no death. And so that was God's vision of creation, that it was good.

It was very good. And so then we move into Genesis chapter 3, and we see that sin enters the world. And sin, when Adam sins, it is his taking God's authority that God gave to him, and he rejects that authority, and makes himself his own master.

When we look in Genesis chapter 3, it says that the serpent came and tempted Eve, and then Eve gave to Adam, and Adam disobeyed the direct command of God, and it separated them.

[3 : 50] When God came, Adam fled from God's sight. There was a separation there. And so then as we move in from there, God removes Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

They are now separated from him, and we see that God does not leave Adam without hope. It says in Genesis 3.15, that I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.

He's talking to Satan here. And he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. So from the very beginning, there was this promise. Man was now separated from God and lost.

There was death. There was this spiritual separation. God said, one day, I'm going to crush Satan's head. I'm going to kill this evil, and there will be this bringing back of the way things were before sin.

And so then we see that that goes into Noah, and we see how vile and how wicked the earth became when sin entered the world, and this separation that was there, that it took a very limited amount of time for God to literally wipe out most of creation.

[5 : 08] And yet, even in that, we find that with God starting with Noah and his family, it wasn't long before the Tower of Babel, and just proof that man was fallen and in need of a Savior.

As we come into the Abrahamic covenant, to the law, we find that Israel came into being or into God's plan, and that God had a plan for Israel, that they were the beginning of restoring man to himself.

He promised through Abraham that the nations would be blessed, and yet he pulled Israel out to be a light to the nations, to be a light to those, the rest of the nations, to see God.

And we see that beginning with Egypt, that God said, I raised up Pharaoh. He says this, I believe it's in Hebrews, that God raised up Pharaoh that he might show, show his glory, his majesty.

I guess just realizing the depth of the need that man had for a Savior, and then looking as the law was given, it says that the law was a tutor to bring us to Christ, that basically the law, it's in Hebrews.

[6 : 46] Let me go to Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 10. It says, Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual form of these realities, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices.

They continually offer year after year. Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once purified, would no longer have any confession of sins. But in the sacrifices, there was a reminder of sins every year, for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

And so you see the nation of Israel longing for the Savior. They knew that they were sinful. The law brought about a consciousness of sin. Paul talks about how the sin-taking opportunity of the law works in him, that it just shows the corruption that he has.

And then the sacrificial system was a picture of things to come. It was incomplete, but they knew it was coming. And so you see God's plan being worked out as he shows man his need for him, his holy law, and what his standards are.

He commanded Israel over and over and over again throughout Leviticus to be holy as he is holy. The standard was set at perfection, but only one sin, James 2.10, he who keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at one point is guilty of all.

[8 : 27] And so man was in this great need of a Savior. And all throughout the Old Testament, we see as man failed to live up to God's standards. We have in the book of Psalms a great example of God's, of a heart of a godly man that knew his sin and yet had a relationship with Christ and knew, or a relationship with God and knew what was coming.

You see there's just the praise that he had for God working through his law and through his spirit. And so that brings us into the prophets who were shouting out, basically, the need for repentance and the Isaiah, the prophecy of a coming Savior.

And so Israel was looking forward to this coming Savior that would save them from their sins and that would bring redemption and reconciliation back to them.

The temple was set up in such a way that God dwelt, his Shekinah glory dwelt in the temple in the Holy of Holies, but man was separated from that. There was a veil that separated man from that. And so these people had to go through a priest who entered once a year into the holy place and his offering was the atonement or the, it was the, it was basically the atonement was what was the shadow of things to come until Christ came.

[9 : 59] and so, I just, I wanted to make clear through this that we have examples of Daniel, of Jonah, the Psalms continually talks about shouting out to the nations that God raised up Israel to be a light to the nations.

They weren't designed to be this little separate group of people that never had any interaction with the outside world, that they were to be a light to which other nations were drawn to God, not to them.

And yet, so often, Israel failed to live up to that standard. They rebelled, they worshipped foreign gods, they allowed the nations to affect them, and yet, God was faithful to them, He was merciful to them over and over again.

He judged them, but He always brought them back in mercy and love, and so, it's often stated that God is different in the Old Testament than He is in the New Testament, but just looking at how God dealt with the nation of Israel and His love and His mercy towards them is incredible.

And so, getting forward, let's just go straight into Christ. That's really what we're here for today is Christ. He is the answer to the Old Testament.

[11:28] He's just, it's amazing. As I was studying for this, it's just, it really is amazing. So, let's, let's see here. Let's look at John chapter 1.

We find that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning, and all things were created through Him. Once again, we have that Christ was the Creator of all things, and through Him all things hold together.

All things were created through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that was made. He, when Christ came, we've got to remember that He was fully God.

He was fully man, but He was also fully God, and so as God came to earth, man who for 4,000 years had been separated from God, finally was able to see God in human flesh.

That should blow our minds right there, that God who was unable to be seen has come in human flesh, veiled His glory so that we could see Him in human flesh. And it says He came into His own, and His own did not receive Him.

[12:58] we have a tendency, I think, or at least I have a tendency to say shame on people. Shame on those people because if I would have been there and that was God, I mean, how amazing would that have been?

But yet, we, Ephesians 2, 1 says we were dead in our trespasses and sins. We love darkness rather than light. He came into His own, and His own did not receive Him.

And so we see Christ's life lived out in perfection. He was tempted as we are in all ways. He was fully human yet without sin. And so what He did for us is amazing.

What we could never do, James 2, 10, if we keep the whole long yet stumble at one point, we're guilty of all. We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and yet He came and He lived a life without sin in the midst of a world that hated Him.

He was persecuted. He was tempted. Just, yeah. Isaiah 53, 11 talks of, let's go there for a second.

[14:14] Isaiah 53. Alright, this is, Isaiah.

He will see it out of His anguish, and He will be satisfied with His knowledge. My righteous servant will justify many, and He will carry their iniquities.

Therefore, I will give Him the many as a portion. He will receive the mighty as spoiled because He has submitted Himself to death and was counted among the rebels. Christ came out of love for us, but He came out of a love for the Father, to do the Father's will.

He said, I didn't come to do my will, but the will of the Father. It is God's, been God's plan since the beginning that He would redeem a people to Himself.

We have been separated from God, and yet God sent Himself. He sent God Himself, Christ, to reconcile us.

[15:19] The cross is the focal point at which God absorbed the wrath that God had for us upon Himself.

The crucifixion was horrible. It was the worst death imaginable, that it was nothing in comparison to the wrath of God being poured out upon His Son. God, that's amazing.

I heard it said once that only an infinite God could pay an infinite price for our sins in a finite amount of time. But for us, as finite individuals, it would take an infinite amount of time to pay for an infinite debt, amount of wrath.

God absorbed an infinite amount of wrath upon that cross. Praise the Lord. That should drive us to a love for Christ that should totally transform our lives.

That's what we've been called to as believers, is to love the Lord our God. And I think when we get an image of the cross, of what Christ did for us, it will transform our lives.

[16:38] When Christ died, we know from the New Testament that the veil was torn. And just to view the...

For 6,000 years, men had been separated from God from what they were created to do. Remember that when we were created, we were created with the relationship with Christ. Man was designed to know and to glorify God through a relationship with Him and through obeying His law.

For this 4,000 year period, man had been separated from God and had been proving over and over and over again how corrupt and how vile he was apart from Christ.

And now, the veil had been torn. And no longer did man need to go through a high priest, but he could go through Christ directly in to God.

And so often, we, I, become so focused on what I'm doing.

[17 : 36] How am I living my Christian life? The ins and outs, the details and all of that. And Jesus rebuked the Pharisees. He said, you look in the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

And He rebuked them because they forgot Him. And I think so often, we get caught up, and it's really legalism, but we get caught up in pleasing God by our actions when in reality, Christ is saying, I didn't, I came and I fulfilled the law.

He said, I didn't come to abolish the law, I came to fulfill the law. And in that, we can know Him, we can have a relationship with Him. He said in John, He said, this is eternal life that you may know Him and Jesus Christ to His Son, that you may know God and Jesus Christ.

We've been created to have a relationship with Christ. To know Him and to know His voice, He said that, my sheep hear my voice and they know me. I would, I would just encourage you and encourage myself, learn to know the voice of the Lord.

to hear from His Word, to hear the Spirit within you. As you live life, Paul said, whatever you do, whether you're eating or whether you're drinking, do all of the glory of God.

[18 : 59] Realize that everything that we do is some form of worship. We're either worshipping ourselves or we're worshipping someone else or we're worshipping God. That we, everything we do is an act of worship of some kind to someone.

And so, call us, the exhortation is to do all to the glory of God. Your daily living, it's not religion and life, it's life, is spiritual.

We are spiritual. We are created in the image of God. And so, as we live life, let us live in a relationship with Christ. with the death of Christ and came the, or with the beginning of the church came the, the coming of the Holy Spirit.

We now have God dwelling within us. Once again, it's that picture of reconciliation where no longer is man separated from God, but now God dwells within us. And so, as we live life, we're not left without a helper.

That if you are a believer, you have God living within you. That we're no longer alive to ourselves, but we're dead to ourselves and alive to Christ as His Spirit comes in and changes us.

[20 : 18] Sanctification is this process of leaving behind, of putting to death the deeds of our flesh and living according to the Spirit. That's a process. We've been saved, we're being saved, and we will be saved, we'll be glorified.

But that the Holy Spirit is working within us. And as believers, it says that we're not to be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. The idea there as of a ship in Paul's day would have a sail.

And basically, that the sail, as it was turned to the right way, would be filled with the wind and driven along. And so this idea of as we live the Christian life, to metaphorically, to turn ourselves into God and to be driven by the Holy Spirit.

And so it's, it's our, it should be our joy and our, our privilege as Christians to, to die daily to ourselves, to take up our cross daily and follow Christ and to turn into the Spirit and the Word of God.

Let Him fill us with His Word and with His Spirit as we're moved along. Moving from that point, this is our Christian life now that we should be, our place now is to bring glory and honor to God that He's left us here for a purpose and that's to make His name known.

[21 : 47] Matthew 28, 18 through 20 is the Great Commission. Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every living creature, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them all that I've commanded you.

For lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age. And He's saying, My Spirit will be with you. I've given, given you what you need to do this. I will be with you. And He's saying, as you're going, is literally how that's stated.

It's not that we, once again, segmented, that we segment, we go, I'm going to be headed overseas in a week and a half, that, oh, I go and then I come back and life is normal.

It's as you're going, living a life that is filled with the Spirit and as you're going, telling others about what Christ has done in your life.

And then, moving forward to the end of the age, to Revelation, there's some amazing things in Revelation.

[22 : 53] Let's turn to Revelation 21. Let's go to Revelation 22. Then we'll go back to 21.

It says, in verse 3, and there will no longer be any curse.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city and His slaves will serve Him. They will see His face and His name will be on their foreheads. When we look at heaven, the overwhelming thought that should consume us is that we will dwell with God physically.

that's, if you know Christ and you love Him, what an amazing thought that this, that the God who dwells in you now will one day dwell with us physically in a new heaven, a new earth for eternity. that should drive our lives as we have this eternal focus of where we're going. But what a glorious thought that one day we will dwell with God in perfection without a curse.

[24 : 24] It says the curse is gone. And so we will return in a way to the Garden of Eden. Life will be perfect. The curse will be gone. The fellowship will be there.

We will live life. It's not, it's eternal life. It's not that time stops and we don't, it's kind of this floating out in the clouds mentality.

But that we'll live with God in human, in our human form. We'll have a resurrected body but it will be without the curse. And sin will be gone.

What a glorious thought. The greatest enemy that we have within it, or is the greatest enemy that we have is within us and it's our flesh. Paul said, I know that in me dwells no good thing.

He knew that his flesh had been corrupted, completely corrupted by sin, but that God was redeeming him. And he said, I've died to myself and I'm living to Christ. And he looked forward to that day.

[25 : 22] He said at the end of Romans 7, O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Thank God for Christ Jesus. When we come into heaven, we will have that resurrected body that will be freed from this body of death, this body of sin.

And so we will be able to once again fully worship God to our maximum capability without the hindrance of sin and our flesh in this world.

What a glorious thought. Going back to Revelation 21. Did I read the, I read the wrong passage, didn't I? Revelation 22.3.

No, okay. Let's go back to Revelation 21. It will be 1-7. This is a, this is an image of what the new heaven and the new earth will be like.

Just let this, let this come into your heart and realize this is where we're headed. Then I saw the new heaven and the new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea no longer existed.

[26 : 28] I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared like a bride adorned for a husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look!

God's dwelling is with humanity and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Death will no longer exist. grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer because the previous things have passed away. Brothers and sisters, that's where we're headed.

That, that is what God has redeemed us to. That is eternal life. It says that, well, before, that eternal life is this, that you may know Him and Jesus Christ.

This, this is where we're going. that this time now is limited. Maybe 60, 70, 80 years for most of us. Maybe less for some.

[27 : 34] But that we're, we're headed towards this. And so, what are we to do now as we're moving towards this time of dwelling with God for eternity? I just, I want to exhort you to live with a heavenly focus.

Live with a mindset of knowing that we, apart from Christ, are dead in our trespasses and sins. That our wrath, the wrath against us is infinite because we have sinned against an infinite God.

But that Christ has come and that He has paid an infinite price for our sins so that we can now be reconciled to Him.

That's the story of creation. That's the story of redemption. Beginning in Genesis, just in summation, that we began with God in a relationship with Him.

That man felt that there was now this barrier between God and man. That man has sinned awfully through the Old Testament and was in need of a Savior.

[28 : 39] But that there was this promise that a Savior would come. That Christ has come and He has absorbed, taken the wrath of God upon Himself. And by His wounds, by His wounds we are healed.

And that now we've been given the ministry of reconciliation. That we now are to go and tell others. If God has changed your life and His Spirit dwells in you and it says that my sheep know me and they hear my voice and by this you'll know that you love me if you keep my commandments. are we striving to keep God's commandments out of a love for Him or are we striving to keep God's commandments to get a love from Him?

God's love is unconditional upon us. He came while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. It's a love that we're called to but it's not a human love.

If your goal is to love people with a human love people aren't very easy to deal with. But that if you love people with God's love you begin to see them not as a physical human being but each person is a soul that has worth and that each person is lost in the need of a Savior and that should that should drive us to tell the nations to declare to declare His glory among the nations that He is worthy of praise and of adoration for what He's done.

[30 : 15] And so as we see a lost humanity we see a world that is basically insulting Christ. What we do is a direct insult against Him and yet Christ has forgiven us in that.

And so my plea is for us to have a greater love for Christ realizing what He's done for us with the greatness of our sin sinning against the infinite God and yet the greatness of His love towards us and that should drive us to worship and praise and love.

I want to close with kind of an illustration. I was in Mexico about a year ago talking to a missionary and he said Daniel it was really funny I'd asked him I said are we on schedule and we were doing some things and some distractions had come up and he said Daniel we're always on schedule and I said what does that mean and he said let me explain it to you he said Daniel when you get up every day you have a choice he said let me liken it to this there were three servants in a king and the one servant would get up every day and he would go out into the kingdom and do whatever he wanted he just you know if he wanted to do whatever he would do that and do something else he would do that and if he did nothing that was fine too he said and that was one servant and then there was another servant there was a servant that went out every day and he ran around as fast as he could as hard as he could and he did everything he could that he thought the king wanted him to do and he worked and he worked and he worked and he worked and the king sat in his kingdom and shook his head and went why why why why but there was a third servant and the third servant would go before his king daily and he would come and kneel before his king and say sir say king here I am I love you and I know that you love me what would you have for me to do today and he said Daniel that's the servant that truly loves his king the other two servants the one servant didn't have a relationship with the king he was he was all caught up in what he thought he needed to do he said and the third one didn't care about the king at all he said Daniel be that servant and he said as long as you're that servant and you're daily coming before the Lord realizing that you are not your own that you've been bought with a price therefore glorify God in your body that each day Romans 12 1 off your body is a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God that's your reasonable act of worship that as you are God's servant his bond slave as Paul would say that your that your duty as a Christian is to to come before the Lord daily and say I'm not my own

I am yours what do you have for me and he said Daniel as long as we're doing that then we're right on schedule because we're doing what God has called us to do and realizing that our schedules and our routines or what we think God wants us to do is often not at all what God wants us to do he wants us to have ears to hear and hearts that are humble and listening to the Lord saying here I am I've been created to do whatever it is that you want me to do and just as a believer when your heart is that way your joy will be immense peace will be immense because you will know that it is not you but that it is God that lives in you that's working and willing to do his good pleasure there's great joy in that if you struggle with always wondering am I doing what the Lord wants me to do or am I in the Lord's will and that if your heart is humble before the Lord and you are broken before him saying Lord here I am use me that's what

[34 : 33] God's asked of us and he will use you he says that those who call on him he will no wise cast out his spirit dwells within us live life in a way of listening to the spirit within you and of listening to the word of God and then realize that we have the immense blessing of being able to come boldly before the throne of grace and to speak to him at any time that he is he is there that when we are humble and pure before him repenting of our sin when we turn back to ourselves that God is the path is clear there is no separation there anymore that God has taken that away and we truly can be in a relationship with him so I would encourage you to first of all to come before him daily and say Lord here I am what would you have me to do today that that's the heart that God calls us to and then second of all to put the gospel on your lips and in your life to be a living testimony of who God is to those who have never heard about a

I guess about a month ago three or four weeks ago I had the opportunity to go down to Buford and do some door to door witnessing so I began to tell this lady about how she was really caught up in this idea that she wasn't worthy of God and I said well ma'am here's the gospel that you aren't worthy of God but that God has come and that he has paid your sin and that you can now have a relationship with him and know him and she said I've never heard it that way before I've never heard that before so I just want to encourage you there are people here we tend to think that oh they've heard the gospel many people have heard a version of the gospel but it's not the gospel the gospel is not that Jesus is just a savior and that he came and died for our sins so we have a free ticket into heaven he came for so much more than that so that we can know him and in that there's joy and fulfillment in life so just those two things to live a humble life before Christ and to live a life of worship and of proclamation of who he is and what he's done I had a whole lot more notes than that but that's what came out so let's pray a