

## The Big Picture (High Five Service)

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What a week. And what an outpouring of service and sacrifice. If you were one of the leaders or helpers, bless you.

And the last thing we want to do is just move on and forget about it. So we decided to celebrate it and mark it by learning what the kids learned. Namely, the spiritual history, and future, of the world. God's work in this world past, present, and future. Or, "The Big Picture" as I've called it. So turn with me to [Psalm 33:6-9](#) and let's get at it.

### Intro

I have a big [puzzle](#) here, 48 pieces, and this particular piece shows the earth. You can see it plain as day. It's even labeled. You know what it is and you know what it shows.

What you *don't* know, is where it goes. Or how it fits with the other pieces. Especially if I just [dump them out](#), and toss it in. Far from a coherent *picture*, it's just a big pile of cardboard.

Which is a lot like our knowledge of the Bible. God's work of redemption and how everything fits. We know some pieces, but not others. We know some parts, but not the whole. The *big picture*.

So I've asked a [couple of kids](#) to help me. Help me with *this* picture, this puzzle, while I work on the *big picture*. (Baylor Pflum & Ryker Isley. Maddie Rigg & Judah Sonnenberg)

While they work on that picture, let's talk about God's. It starts with . . .

### **Creation – God created everything to glorify him (Psalm 33:6-9)**

That's the first piece of the puzzle.

[Psalm 33:6-9](#) – [6] *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host* [the host of the heavens; all the stars, planets, and galaxies]. [7] *He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses.* [8] *Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!* [9] *For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.* (ESV)

He spoke, and it came to be. Just like it says in Genesis 1:1 – *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Including angels, animals, and us. Adam and Eve. He spoke, and this world came into existence.

And lest you think that's just a feel-good bedtime story, think again. Because **Hebrews 11:3** says – *By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.* By faith, trusting God's Word, we understand that he spoke, and it all came into being. Out of nothing. God created every thing, out of no thing.

And that includes the things we *can't* see. (**Colossians 1:16**) *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.* You name it, God created it.

And he did so, so that we would *glorify* him. You know what glorify means? "Make him look good. Make much of him." Exalt him. Worship him.

Look at v8 again. [8] *Let all the earth fear the LORD* [revere him; honor him; another way to say, "glorify the LORD"]; *let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him* [more glory]! [9] *For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.*

Why should we glorify God? Because he deserves it. He spoke and it came to be. That's the idea. And that's the first piece of God's big picture.

How are you doing over here? ([Help with puzzle](#). [One piece missing](#).) That's the worst! Can you imagine if God left a piece of *his* picture out? His *work* in our world?

I tell you what. You go back to your seat and pay close attention. Maybe that piece will turn up. ([Thank them](#).)

The last piece of their puzzle is missing, and the first piece of *God's* puzzle is creation.

The second part of the big picture is . . .

**The Fall – Sin entered the world, but God promised the hope of light (Romans 5:12)**  
It's called "The Fall" because that's the point at which mankind fell from perfection, into sin. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, ate of the forbidden tree, and were punished. Banished from the Garden of *Eden*, and banished from the presence of *God*. They fell.

And we did too, along with them. **Romans 5:12** – *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.* Just as Adam sinned, we sin. And just like Adam died, we die. So "The Fall" not only accounts for evil and sin in the world, but death as well.

Not to mention all the difficulty leading up to it. Like pain in childbirth. Thorns and thistles. Work that never ends. Trials and tribulation. It's all due to "The Fall."

But even in the midst of Adam and Eve's sin and punishment, God promises hope. Setting the stage for a massive reversal. A bright light in the midst of darkness.

It's found in **Genesis 3:15**, and it's often called the first Gospel. The first hint at God's good news.

Speaking to Satan, embodied as a serpent, God says – *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*"

In other words, *Eve's* offspring will deal a long-term *death* blow to Satan, he will bruise his *head*; while *Satan* would only deal a *glancing* blow to him. Referring to the temporary death of Jesus on the cross. Bruising his *heel*.

That's what this verse foreshadows. The cross. Where Jesus was temporarily *wounded*, and Satan was permanently *defeated*. The hope of light, in the midst of darkness ([lights off](#)).

The third piece of the puzzle is . . .

## **Redemption** – Jesus is the light of the world who overcame the darkness (John 8:12)

Redemption is another word for *salvation*. Or deliverance. Rescue, and release. And it's a big piece of God's big picture. The centerpiece. The piece that holds everything else together.

To see it, turn with me to John 8:12.

Little known fact about me, I love flashlights. I do. Not phone lights for some reason, but flashlights. Especially with the advent of LEDs. Remember those big old lantern batteries? Try packing one of those in your suitcase.

I like flashlights so much, every time I see a 3-pack I want to buy it. Not to mention headlamps, spotlights, glowsticks, and lanterns. If it shines, blinks, beams, or glows, I'm in. Because there's something compelling about light. Especially light in the darkness.

How much more, Jesus? As the light of the *world*. John 8:12 – *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Talk about a flashlight! He's a *floodlight*. The brightest light of all. The light of the entire world!

You know what that means? 5 things:

**1. He offers hope.** As the *light* of the world, he offers *hope* to the world. Hope to our soul. The hope of salvation. The rock-solid confidence that our life and eternity is secure.

**2. He brings joy.** Like the string-lights people put up around their deck. To create *ambiance*. They just make you feel good. Joyful. That's why a joyless Christian is a contradiction of terms.

**3. He reveals truth.** Just like a flashlight reveals what's *really* around you in this world, Jesus reveals the *truth* of this world.

**4. He exposes sin.** Just like a floodlight exposes every last speck of dirt, Jesus exposes every last speck of sin. Nothing is hidden from his sight.

**5. He ensures victory.** Victory over the darkness of evil. Just like it says in John 1:5 – *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it*. Sin doesn't win, Jesus does. Satan doesn't prevail, Jesus does.

That's what it means for him to be the light of the world and overcome the darkness. He rescues us from its oppression. He saves us from its consequences. He *redeems* us from its grip and gives us life. The *light of life*.

The fourth piece of the puzzle is . . .

## **Transformation** – We are called to reflect the light of Jesus in a dark world (Matthew 5:14-16)

Turn with me to one more passage. Matthew 5:14-16. This is part of Jesus' famous sermon on the mount, and after telling his followers that living *his* way is the opposite of

the *world's* way, and that they will be blessed for it, he says in v14 – *"You are the light of the world."*

Wait a minute. I thought *Jesus* is the light of the world. Which is it?

Both. Jesus is the *true light* [John 1:9], which *gives light*. Light to everyone who believes in him. Everyone who follows him. He *gives* us the light of life (John 1:4), that we might shine and reflect the light of life. Jesus is the source and we're the mirror. (2 Cor 4:6)

And notice the word "you" in v14. *"You are the light of the world."* In the original language that word is plural. To say that *corporately* we're the light of the world. *Together* we reflect the light of Christ. Our faith is personal, but it's never meant to be solitary.

*We* are the light of the world. That's why Jesus follows it with – [14b] *"A city [a group of lights] set on a hill cannot be hidden*. We're unmistakable when we're together. Unmistakable as a church. And we ought to be unashamed. Set on a hill.

[15] *Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house*. [Lamps are lit to be seen. Intentionally.]

[16] *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*.

That's the *transformation* God intends. Having received his light, we reflect his light. We display it in a dark world. We live his way and do his will so that others will do the same.

The last piece of the picture is . . .

## **Restoration** – Jesus will reign forever in his heavenly kingdom (Revelation 11:15)

His heavenly kingdom on earth. Literally.

And look at this. I found the last piece! Come on up and put it in. (Baylor, Ryker. Maddie, Judah.)

The last piece is restoration. Meaning someday, Jesus will reign over *all* the world, and it will never end. It's something the Old Testament *prophets* spoke of, something the angel promised to *Mary*, and something the Apostle *John* foresaw.

From the prophets, **Daniel 7:13-14** says – [13] *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man [referring to Jesus], and he came to the Ancient of Days [God the Father] and was presented before him*.

[14] *And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed*. Jesus will reign. It's been decreed.

Then there's the angel speaking to Mary 550 years later. Saying in **Luke 1:31-33** – [31] *Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus*. [32] *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High*.

*[32b] And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob [God's people; the church] forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*" (Luke 1:31–33) Restoration at its best.

The prophets foretold it, the angel promised it, and the Apostle John foresaw it. In his vision at the *end* of time found in **Revelation 11:15** – *[15] Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."*

Heaven on earth. A *new* earth it says in chapter 21. With no more sin, no more shame, no more death, and no more stain. Just God with us, and us with him, forever and ever.

**You Are Loved**