

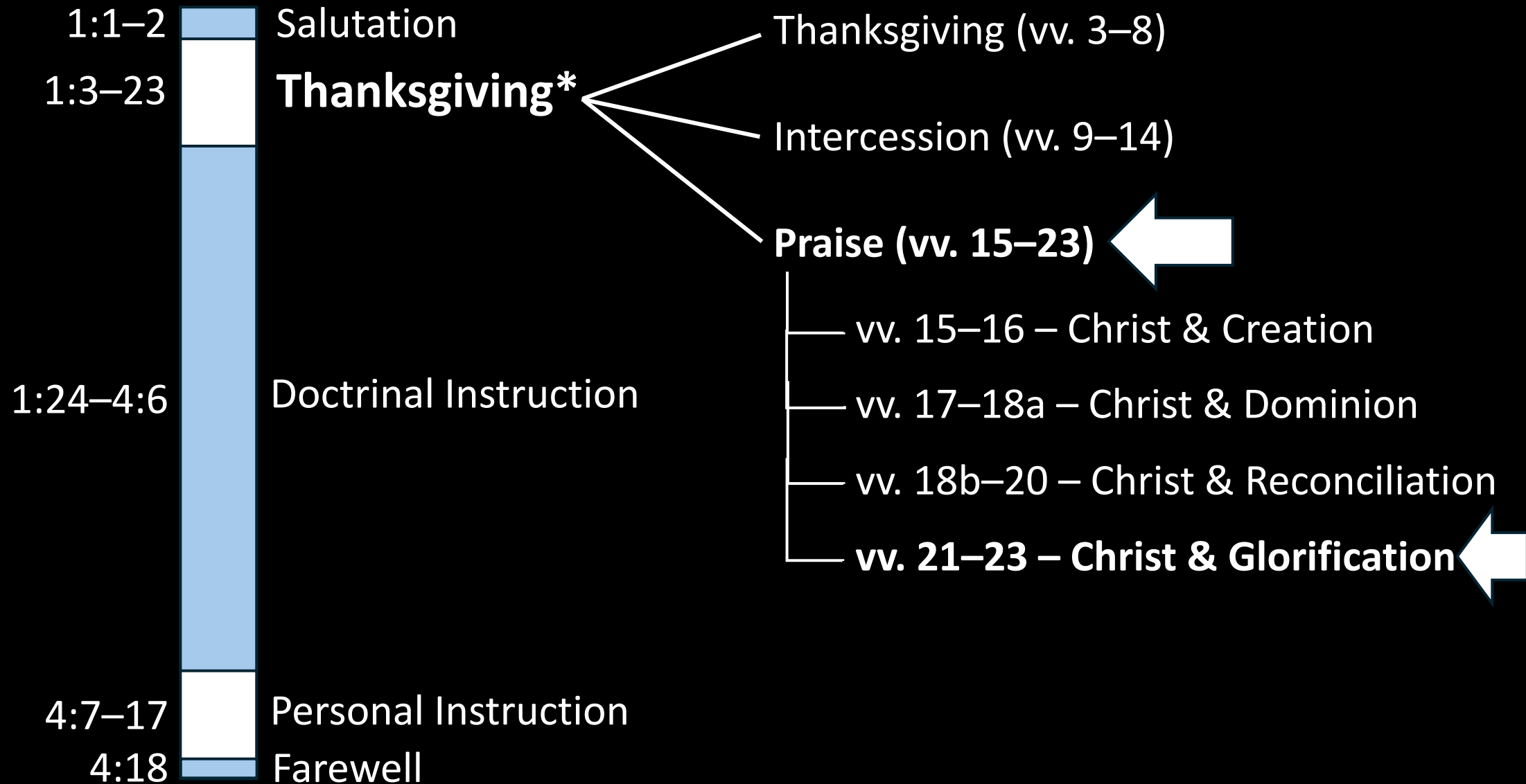


*Christ over All:  
Paul's Letter  
to the Colossians*

**“The Champion of  
Our Redemption,”  
Part 5**

**Colossians 1:15–23**

# THE OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS



## An Outpouring of Praise (1:15–23)

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[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

[16] For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

I. Christ and  
Creation  
(vv. 15–16)

[17] He is [also] before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

[18] He is also head of the body, the church;

II. Christ and  
Dominion  
(vv. 17–18a)

and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. [19] For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, [20] and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. . . .

III. Christ and  
Reconciliation  
(vv. 18b–20)

## An Outpouring of Praise (1:15–23) – cont'd

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[21] And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, [22] yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—[23] if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

### IV. Christ and Glorification (vv. 21–23)

- A. The Necessity of Our Reconciliation (v. 21)
- B. The Means of Our Reconciliation (v. 22a)
- C. The Purpose of Our Reconciliation (v. 22b)
- D. The Proof of Our Reconciliation (v. 23)

## A. The Necessity of Reconciliation (1:21)

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**“And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind,  
*engaged in evil deeds*”**

- **“And”** – even though Paul continues his outpouring of praise to Christ in v. 21, he distinctly shifts from a cosmic focus to a particular one.
- **“You”** — for the first time in this section (vv. 15–23), Paul directly addresses the believers in Colossae.
- **“Although you were formerly”** – Paul begins by reminding these believers of their *past* condition.
- Paul recalls their past using three descriptions:

“And although you were formerly **alienated** and hostile in mind,  
*engaged in evil deeds*”

1) “**Alienated**” – describes the resulting state of *alienation/estrangement* caused by an act performed by God that severed the relationship (see Genesis 3).



CONDEMNED  
STATUS

- This description speaks of their past *legal status*.
- **Ephesians 4:17–18** – “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.”

“And although you were formerly alienated and **hostile in mind**,  
*engaged in evil deeds*”

2) “Hostile in mind” – describes a state of active opposition (see Romans 8:5–8).



CONDEMNED  
NATURE

- This description speaks of their past *sinful nature*.
- Paul specifically identifies the root problem of sinful practice—*the mind* (“the *noetic* effect of sin”).
- The unsaved person sins most acutely in his or her manner of thinking.
- That which was to be the seat of love and worship (Matthew 22:37), was the seat of active rebellion.

“And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind,  
*engaged in evil deeds*”

3) “*Engaged in evil deeds*” – describes the habitual practice of life.



CONDEMNED  
CONDUCT

- This description speaks of their past *sinful conduct*.
- Specifically, Paul expresses it as an *outcome* of the hostility of the mind (sinful mind → sinful behavior).
- This stands in stark contrast with the description of the Christian walk provided in v. 10, “so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”



“Total depravity emphasizes the devastating impact of sin on the person and covers three related concepts: (1) the pollution and corruption of all aspects of a person; (2) the complete inability of a person to please God; and (3) universality, in that all are conceived and born as sinners”

—John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 467



# Total Depravity

“The teaching of Scripture, after all, is not that every human lives at all times in all possible actual sins and is in fact guilty of violating all God’s commandments. It only refers to the deepest inclination, the innermost disposition, the fundamental directedness of human nature and confesses that it is not turned toward God but away from him.”

—Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3.120



**Total Inability**

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

**—Ephesians 2:1–3**

## B. The Means of Reconciliation (1:22a)

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**“yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death”**

- **“Yet . . . now”** – creates the sharpest of contrasts with the **“although . . . formerly”** at the beginning of v. 21.
- **“He has reconciled you”** – this specific verb occurs only here and in v. 20; it describes the decisive ending of the *state of enmity*.
- Although *cosmic reconciliation* was described as future in v. 20, here it is described as accomplished and applied salvifically to believers in the present.

“yet He has now reconciled you **in His fleshly body** **through death**”

- Literally, “by His body of His flesh through death.”
- **“In His fleshly body”** – to achieve the reconciliation that would appease the wrath of the all-holy God and bestow peace upon ruined sinners, the Son had to take on human nature.
- **“Through death”** – but more than the Incarnation was needed; the Incarnate Son had *to die*.
- **Hebrews 2:17** – “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

**“Substitution”**  
**by Anne Ross Cousin**  
**(1824–1906)**

O Christ, what burdens bow'd Thy head!  
Our load was laid on Thee;  
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,  
Didst bear all ill for me.  
A victim led, Thy blood was shed;  
Now there's no load for me.

Death and the curse were in our cup,  
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!  
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop—  
'Tis empty now for me.  
That bitter cup—love drank it up;  
Now blessings' draught for me.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

**—Ephesians 2:4–5**

## C. The Purpose of Reconciliation (1:22b)

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**“in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach”**

- **“In order to present you”** – introduces the *divine design* of the reconciliation secured for believers by the death of Christ.
  - **Verse 20** – “and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”
  - **Verse 22** – “He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, ~~in order~~ to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

FUTURE COSMIC  
RESTORATION

FUTURE BELIEVERS'  
GLORIFICATION



“in order **to present you before Him** holy and blameless  
and beyond reproach”

- “**To present you**” – the formal presentation of a person for examination.
  - **Colossians 1:28** – “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”
  - **2 Corinthians 11:2** – “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.”
  - **Ephesians 5:27** – “that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy [ἁγία] and blameless [ἄμωμος].”

“in order to present you before Him **holy** and blameless  
and beyond reproach”

- “**Holy**” – “sanctified”; the term describes something that was *set apart* from the world and *dedicated to* the Lord.



PERFECT  
STATUS

- The term was already used to describe the Colossians in vv. 2, 4, 12 in the *positional* sense: “saints.”
- The term is here used to describe the Colossians in the ultimate, final, *perfective* sense.

“in order to present you before Him holy and **blameless** and beyond reproach”

- “**Blameless**” – the term was used to describe sacrifices without blemish; more significantly, it was used to describe the purity of Christ.



PERFECT  
NATURE

- **Hebrews 9:14** – Christ . . . “who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God . . . .”
- **1 Peter 1:13–14** – “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

“in order to present you before Him holy and blameless  
and **beyond reproach**”

- “**Beyond reproach**” – “unaccusable”; describes one who’s character is of such impeccability that no accusation can be launched.




PERFECT  
CONDUCT

- It is required of deacons (1 Timothy 3:10) and elders (Titus 1:6–7) in a relative sense; it is used here to describe believers in an absolute sense
- **1 Corinthians 1:7–8** – “. . . awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“in order to present you before Him **holy** and **blameless**  
and **beyond reproach**”

- **1 Thessalonians 3:11–13** – “Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** – “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

# OUR IDENTITY ACCORDING TO COLOSSIANS 1:21–22

THE PAST	THE PRESENT	THE FUTURE
<b>“You were formerly” (v. 21)</b>	<b>“Yet now” (v. 22a)</b>	<b>“In order to” (v. 22b)</b>
<b>“Alienated”</b>	 <b>“Reconciled”</b>	<b>“Holy”</b>
<b>“Hostile”</b>		<b>“Blameless”</b>
<b>“Engaged in evil deeds”</b>		<b>“Beyond reproach”</b>

## **D. The Proof of Reconciliation (1:23)**

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**“if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast,  
and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have  
heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of  
which I, Paul, was made a minister”**



## Application

- ✓ Recall your unworthiness.
- ✓ Remember the cost.
- ✓ Rejoice in the result.