

An Unchanging God

Things that change

Today is heavy on teaching... I hope it gives you great hope in a changing world.

Act 0 – God’s Eternal Plan to Have a People for His Name

God’s eternal plan

John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

Ephesians 1:4-5 “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will...”

“Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.” – Evangelical Free Church Statement of Faith, Article 1

Act 1 – The Garden of Eden

God made man for a relationship with him

Genesis 2:8 “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.”

The Garden was a place of lush beauty. This is God’s plan A, and he will bring the plan to completion.

Genesis 3:8 “And they heard the sound of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.”

Technical note: This is not the normal word for walk, but a special verb form that describes continuous action. (halak – “to walk” vs. mithalek – “to stroll in an ongoing, leisurely, or habitual way”)

Separated by sin

Genesis 3:24 “He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Act 2 – The Tabernacle/Temple

Cool details about the tabernacle

God’s presence in the tabernacle/temple – Leviticus 9, 1 Kings 8:10-13 Both show God’s presence descending powerfully upon his people

The temple looked like Eden – God walked in the temple (Leviticus 26:12), Eden was on a mountain like the temple was on Zion (Ezekiel 28:13-14), Eden’s entrance faced East like the temple/tabernacle’s did

Sermon Notes – Malachi 3:6

(Exodus 27:13-16, Ezekiel 43:1-4)

“How God’s Big Story Gives Hope”

Both guarded by cherubim to keep away sinful man – Compare Genesis 3:24 and Exodus 25:18-22, 1 Kings 6:23-28

A golden lampstand, with “branches,” was in the temple – Resembling a tree of life! Exodus 25:31-36

What’s the point?

Even with Eden lost, God would create a new way of being with his people, a symbol that he would ultimately restore the entire world with his blessing through Abraham’s descendants.

Act 3 – Jesus Christ

Jesus came and “tabernacled” among us. (John 1:14)

He appeared as a great high priest to give access to God (Hebrews 8:1)

He was the ultimate sacrifice, of which all previous temple sacrifices were but a shadow, defeating the curse on Adam and mankind (Rom. 5:12, Heb. 8:5)

Christ’s death tore the veil of separation in the temple, so sinful man could approach a holy God (Heb 10:19-20)

Christ himself was the new temple! (John 2:19-21)

Act 4 – The Church

God dwells with us now through the Holy Spirit and calls us together his temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16)

The church is a living temple not made with stones, but people. (1 Peter 2:5)

The mission of the church is inviting the world back into God’s presence (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

Spiritual gifts are given to the church for the purpose of believers experiencing God personally and revealing his truth and presence to the world. (1 Corinthians 12:7, 14:24-25, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

Act 5 – New Heaven and Earth

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man! (Revelation 21:2)

God himself is the temple (Rev 21:22)

The Tree of Life returns (Rev. 22:2)

Precious stones in both (Rev. 21:19-20)

Fruit from the tree (Rev. 22:1-3)

The holy of holies, a perfect cube (1 Kings 6:20, Rev. 21:16)

And it has a river (Rev. 22:1)

Only seen from a high mountain (Rev. 21:10, contra Ezk. 28:13)

The curse is removed! (Rev. 21:3)

The Grand Finale

Questions for Personal Study

1. Why does it matter to you that God is committed to “redeem a people for himself?”
2. What are the themes that run through each “Act” of God’s story?
3. What are the connections between Eden, the Temple, Christ, the Church, and the New Heaven and Earth?
4. How/why do these truths give you hope?