

Who Is Jesus? - Colossians 1:15-23

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Preacher: Alan Giles

[0 : 00] three. I'll read it out and once I read then I'll just pray for Alan and Alan will will teach us from from this passage. So verse 15.

The sun is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together and he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior, but now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you wholly in his sight without blemish and free from accusation. If you continue in your faith established and firm and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel, this is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Father God, we thank you for blessing this church with your servant, Alan. We pray for him now that it would be your words that he speaks to us and your truths that he teaches us. And we pray for each one of us that we would listen well and learn how to put it into practice into our everyday lives, that we don't just leave it here on a Sunday and forget about it when we walk out the door, but that we remember that Jesus is for every day of the week. In Jesus' name, amen.

Thanks, Alan. All right. Well, it was a dark and stormy night one night on the Sea of Galilee, and the small boat out there was tossing around in the waves. The winds were whipping, the rain was pouring down. Being Irish, you can imagine what that's like. The waves were crashing against the sides of the boat.

[2 : 37] The fishermen in the boat were panicked. They were experienced men on the sea, but this was a storm unlike most they'd ever seen. They were panicked, and yet somehow somebody in the boat was sound asleep.

They woke this man in the boat. They said, Jesus, you better get ready because this could be the end. And Jesus responded, peace, be still. The disciples thought he was talking to them, but it turned out he was talking to the storm in the sea. The storm stopped. The rain let up.

And the sea calmed. Who is this Jesus? They asked. That the storms and the seas obey him. Sometime later, this same man was teaching, and a large crowd had gathered, so large that nobody could even get to the place where he was teaching. And so some friends of a paralytic, they cut a hole in the ceiling, and they lowered this paralyzed man down into the room where Jesus was teaching.

Seeing the faith of the man's friends and having pity on the man, he looked at him and he said, my friend, your sins are forgiven. And the religious teachers of the day, they thought to themselves. They didn't even say out loud.

[4 : 06] They just thought to themselves, who is this Jesus that he thinks he can forgive sins? And knowing their thoughts, he said, I'll show you that I have the authority to forgive sins.

And he looked at the paralyzed man and he said, get up, take your mat and go home. And the paralyzed man stood up, picked up his mat and went running out the door, rejoicing and praising God.

Who is this Jesus? They asked. Who is this Jesus? Sometime later, this same Jesus was sitting majestically, yet humbly on a donkey.

He was being led into the city of Jerusalem, which had swollen up to 10 times its normal size because of the feast of the Passover that was coming up. And as this Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the crowds, they lined the streets, they placed their cloaks on the ground, they waved palm branches, Hosanna in the highest, they said, here is the coming King.

He is the son of David. He's come. He's the Messiah. He's going to restore Israel to its prominence in the world. Here is King Jesus. And as they got in the city, the crowds got excited.

[5 : 23] The whole city was stirred up. Who is this? They asked each other. This is Jesus was the response. Who is Jesus? The question has been asked ever since he walked planet Earth.

Who is Jesus? In 1994, Life magazine even had on their cover, Jesus. Who is he?

Musically, everyone from Kanye West to Green Day to Carrie Underwood to even U2 have sung songs about Jesus, saying who is Jesus and giving their own interpretation.

Jesus is on t-shirts. There's a Jesus is my homeboy t-shirt out there. Even the fashion industry is trying to figure out who is this Jesus? What can I call him? How should I refer to him?

In fact, a Google search that I did this week in less than one second gave me 6.5 million answers to the question, who is Jesus? Who is Jesus?

[6 : 30] That's the question Paul sets out to answer here today. And he does so in the form of a poem or a song. And as any poem of his day would have gone, it's got a rise and then a crescendo and a fall with an echo.

And in verses 15-20 of Colossians 1, Paul answers the question, who is Jesus, via this poem. And at the very top of it, he says, He is the one in whom all things hold together.

And as he builds his poem, he's speaking of creation. He is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn over all creation. In him all things were created. Things in heaven, on earth, visible, invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things. And then he hits his crescendo. In him all things hold together. And he's speaking about creation.

All of creation comes from, is done by, was made through, and for, Jesus, who holds it all together.

[7 : 47] And then from that point, he comes down into new creation. He says, In Jesus, all things hold together, including the church. He says, He is the head, the body, the church.

He's the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. So that in everything, he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things.

Whether things, again, on earth or in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. This is Paul's answer to the age-long question, Who is Jesus?

And there's many answers provided in this little text. In order to not be here until Monday morning, we're going to look at three of those answers today. Okay? Just three answers in here. And again, three of many things that are in this text.

It's packed. First, we're just going to look at the fact that Jesus is the beginning of all creation. And that's the left side, or the rise in the poem, the beginning of all creation.

[8 : 52] And he is the beginning of new creation. Okay? When we say new creation, we're talking about Christians. And we'll unpack that a little bit. Okay? So, in the same way that Jesus is the beginning of all creation, He's the beginning of new creation.

Paul says in verse 15, The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Now, He does not mean He's the first to be created.

We want to be careful there. That's not what Paul's saying. He's not the first to be created. In fact, the word has nothing to do with birth. It has everything to do with rank. He ranks above all creation. He's the one from whom all creation came to be, which is why he follows up in verse 17, with He is before all things. That is, all of creation finds its beginning in Jesus.

So, before there ever was anything that could be called creation, visible or invisible, Paul's very, very sure to cover it all, visible or invisible, in heaven or on earth, before any of that existed, there was Jesus.

[10 : 00] Father, Son, and Spirit, eternally, one God, outside of space and time, Jesus, the Son of God. And in a similar way, to how He's the beginning of creation, Paul says, in verse 18, He's the beginning of new creation.

He's the head of the body, the church. He's the beginning, and again, we hear the word firstborn, from among the dead. Okay, He's called the firstborn from among the dead, because the

resurrection of the dead is from Him, and after Him.

Okay, so Jesus, He's in heaven, He actually exists outside of space and time, He creates heaven, He creates earth, He creates everything that's visible and invisible, and then, everything goes wrong because of sin, and so Jesus takes on bodily form, we call that the incarnation.

He's born a virgin birth through Mary, and He takes on flesh, the incarnation. He lives a perfect life, that's important to know. He never sins.

He fulfills the law in its entirety, and yet lays down His life in the crucifixion. He allows Himself to be strapped to a cross, and He bears the wrath of God that we were supposed to take, the crucifixion.

[11 : 22] Then three days later, He rises from the dead, and it's a historical fact. Even non-Christian historians write that this man, Jesus, was crucified, and three days later, He rose from the dead, the firstborn of new creation.

That's why Paul will say in 2 Corinthians 5, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. So before creation, there's Jesus, and in the same way, before there's ever a single Christian, there is Jesus. So now we ask, why does Paul say he's the head of the church? What does it have to do with Christians? Well, the church is simply the community of all true believers. It's a community of all true believers for all time.

Believers in what? Believers in who Jesus is. That He is a Son of God, that He's creator of all things, by Him, through Him, for Him, that He came to earth in the incarnation, He died on the cross in the crucifixion, He rose again in the resurrection.

Anybody who proclaims to believe that, we say Christian. And then the church is the gathering of the Christians. So the global church, for all time and in all places, would be the gathering of all Christians who've ever lived coming together.

[12 : 42] That would be the church. But then that gets broken down into smaller churches. So we're at Karageline Baptist Church, the local gathering here in Karageline of true believers in Christ.

Jesus is the head of this church, just like He's head of every Christian church. So Paul says, He's the head of the local church, He's the head of the global church, and in this case in Colossians, he's speaking to the church in Colossae, and he's speaking truth that still applies to us right here in Karageline Baptist Church.

So there's creation, and then there's new creation. And new creation doesn't happen without Jesus Christ. It's important to know that, that you cannot become a new creation without Jesus Christ. And it starts with His resurrection. That's why the resurrection is so important. You can't say, I'm not sure if Jesus rose from the dead and claimed to be a Christian.

He's the firstborn from the dead, and everything we claim follows His resurrection from the grave. So if we say we're a Christian, if we say we're a new creation, we're claiming, my identity is in Christ, who rose from the dead.

[14 : 01] And I too, like Him, will rise from the dead someday. Ladies who have been married, they probably get this new identity concept better than any of us.

A lady who gets married and takes the last name of her husband, she literally oftentimes gets a new identity. I know that my wife, we've been married 16 years, she got a new driver's license, she got a new passport, and it no longer said Cassie Howard, it said Cassie Giles.

And nowadays, if you said, hey, Mrs. Howard, she'd probably think you were talking to her mom. But if you said Mrs. Giles, she would turn. She's a new person.

She has a new identity. We had a lady get married at a place I once worked, and a friend of mine, he was trying to congratulate her when she got back from her honeymoon. He called her up and he asked for her by her new last name, is Mrs. Jenks there.

And the poor lady, she put him on hold and was scrolling through the roster looking for Mrs. Jenks until it finally dawned on her he was asking for her. She had a new identity and then she, I remember she picked up the phone and kind of changed her voice a little bit and said, oh, this is Mrs. Jenks.

[15 : 10] It was a funny thing, but it was just an illustration of the fact that that because of her marriage she had a new identity. Her new identity was Mrs. Jenks.

That didn't happen without a start. It didn't happen without a marriage. In the same way a Christian is a new creation, has a new identity, it begins with Christ. So in the same way all of creation began with Christ, all of new creation begins with Jesus Christ.

But more than that, Paul adds that Jesus is the one through whom all things came into existence and the one through whom Christians came to be.

From him and through him. In verse 16, Paul says, In him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him.

And it's worth noting, he also says, for him. Through him and for him. And that's all of creation. Nothing is exempt. There's nothing you can see and there's nothing that's invisible.

[16:23] There's nothing here on earth. And think about this, there's nothing in heaven that came to be apart from Jesus Christ. In the same way that all things have been created through him and for him and creation owes its existence to him, so too all Christians owe our existence to Jesus Christ.

Paul says in verse 19, God was pleased to have his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

And when Paul says all things were created in him and through him, he's clearly saying there's nothing that came to be without coming through his work. And in the same way, you cannot become a Christian unless it's through Christ.

You can't bring yourself into Christianity in the same way that you couldn't bring yourself to be born into this world. I can guarantee you there's nobody in here whose first memory was I'm going to be born today.

I'm going to make myself a person today. Nobody, if you have that memory, come see me afterwards. We're going to get you on TV. You're going to be a multi-millionaire. We're all going to know you're lying because nobody has the memory of I'm going to make myself a person today.

[17:44] In the same way, you couldn't just make yourself a person. You can't just make yourself a Christian apart from Christ. There's a movie, Aladdin, that just came out.

Has anybody seen the remake of Aladdin? My kids have seen it. Some have seen it. I haven't gotten to see the remake, but I asked the kids and they assured me it hasn't changed much. And the story of Aladdin is interesting because he's got to be a prince, but he's not born from a king. And in order to marry the princess, he's got to be a prince. And so since he wasn't born from a king, he's not a prince. So either someone has to change the rules or he's got to get someone to prince him, so to speak. And I feel like somewhere a prince would be happy for me saying prince somebody, but Aladdin needs someone to prince him.

He's either got to be adopted by a king or in his story he finds a genie and he makes a wish and what's the wish? Make me a prince. He knows he can't just prince himself. He can't just decide to become a prince.

He needs someone to make him a prince. And it's just an echo of what happens in Christianity is you can't just say Christian now, but we need someone to make us a Christian and that's through Jesus that that happens.

[18:58] You can't be a Christian apart from the saving grace of Jesus Christ. There's no other way to heaven but through Jesus. Muhammad cannot get you into eternal paradise.

Buddha can't help you get enough karma to get there. You cannot prince yourself. You cannot Christianize yourself. You cannot do enough good works. You can't earn enough merit. You can't pay enough penance to make yourself a Christian.

It is only by Jesus, in Jesus, through Jesus, and for Jesus that we become new creation in Christ. all of creation comes into existence through Jesus, for Jesus, and in the same way all Christians are brought into His body by Him and through Him and for Him.

And finally, Paul says He's also the one who holds all of creation together. He's the one who holds us all together as well.

The crescendo there in the second half of verse 17 is loud and bold because of the way the poem is written. That this is the truth.

[20:11] This is the point that Paul's trying to make. That in Him all things hold together. And if you think of the structure of the poem, in Him all of creation is held together and in Him all of Christianity is held together.

In Him all of the universe is held together and in Him all of the church is held together. In Him all of planet Earth is held together and in Him every Christian is held together. Both and all are held together by Him.

He holds together all things. Science tells us there are at least 30 cosmological parameters that hold the universe together.

30 that we have figured out. So if you think about the universe which we are a tiny part of. If you think about the universe and you think about 30 cosmic dials that have to be just the right setting for the universe to exist.

Science tells us that the odds the precision I should say of those dials that needs to be set to 1 in 5300 million billion billion billion billion billion that's the precision by which those 30 cosmological dials have to be set to for the universe to maintain its existence if one dial just accidentally gets nudged a little bit the entire universe implodes on itself.

[21 : 39] It's an enormous universe. It's a finely tuned universe. It's a well designed universe.

And so too is planet Earth. One scientist, he writes, Earth's location in the universe, its size, its composition, its structure, its atmosphere, its temperature, its internal dynamics, its many intricate cycles that are essential to life testify to the degree to which our planet is exquisitely and precariously balanced.

that if Earth were just to be shifted a little bit off its axis, it's game over. If we're just being moved a little bit closer to the sun or brought further from the sun, that's the end of humanity.

It's precariously balanced. And Paul says, it's being held there by Jesus. But he doesn't stop at creation.

He also comes to new creation. He says, if Jesus is holding the universe together like that, and if Jesus is holding planet Earth together the way He is, then aren't we okay to rest in His finished work on our behalf?

[23 : 02] Won't He hold us together better than we could even hold ourselves together? Amen.

Paul takes this poem and he immediately applies it here in verses 21-23.

He says, once we were alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds. But Jesus has reconciled us in His body of flesh by His death in order that we might be presented holy and blameless and above reproach if we continue in the faith stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel.

And again, the gospel is the true message that Jesus Christ really is the beginning of all creation.

That in Him and through Him and for Him all things were created and that He holds all things together.

And then the same for new creation that the beginning of Christianity is His resurrection from the dead and that in Him and through Him and for Him people are brought to new life in Christ and that He holds His church together.

Paul says we should never shift from that. We would be foolish to decide we're going to step outside of our universe to just someone that we've come up with on our own.

[24 : 23] And the same way we would be foolish to step outside of the universe that Jesus holds together, we would be foolish to step outside of the faith that He authors and He perfects and He holds together.

We are not the beginning of all creation. Jesus is. We are not the ones by which all things came into existence. Jesus is. I think we would all agree we are not holding the universe together.

Jesus is. And if we really want to be honest with ourselves, we don't even hold our own lives together very well, do we? But Jesus does.

I've been in Karagaline for just under a month now. So I don't know every detail of every life in here. I couldn't know that much. But I can make some educated guesses because it's very similar to a lot of churches because we're similar people all across the planet.

And we have people from all around the planet in here in this room. So we can make some guesses. Educated guesses. I would say you're probably busy. You're probably tired.

[25 : 33] If you're single, you're probably hoping that you'll find that perfect person. If you're married, you've already found out that they weren't perfect. I know because you didn't marry my wife.

That's the only... Maybe you want kids, but for some reason God hasn't given them to you yet. And if you have kids, they're growing up too fast.

And you feel like you haven't quite given them everything that they need for the life that they're not to be called out to yet. If you don't have a job, you're probably losing hope you'll ever find one.

If you have a job, you wish you had a different job. Work is stressful and exhausting. If you have co-workers, they probably anger you. Your boss is probably too hard to please.

If you're lonely, you probably wish you had more friends. If you've had friends, you've probably been burned and betrayed by friends. If you're alive and you're breathing today, your life at times probably seems like it is spiraling out of control.

[26 : 46] Probably not every day. Probably some days are great. But there's probably times where you just go, I can't even hold my own life together.

If you're not a Christian, you probably don't know where to turn. If you are a Christian, perhaps you've even forgotten the Savior you first came to love.

You probably sit there and say, give me something practical, Pastor. Give me something I can do. Give me some way to fix this mess I've made.

Give me some way to get my life under control to hold all these moving parts, to properly juggle all the things that I'm juggling. You'd probably say, give me some hope.

We sang the song earlier, our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Our hope is in heaven. Our hope created heaven.

[27 : 53] Our hope came to earth. Our hope lived the perfect life that none of us could ever live. Our hope died the death that all of us should have died with the wrath of God being poured out on him.

Our hope went into a tomb. Our hope rose from that grave three days later. Our hope ascended back into heaven. Our hope is in Jesus. He is in heaven. He is preparing a place for us and he holds all things together for his glory.

Our hope is to fix our eyes on Jesus. To read about him in scripture. To talk about him with others. To worship him in song. To pray through him and to rest in his finished work on our behalf.

That's our hope. Who is Jesus? He is the image of the invisible God. He is the first born over all creation.

He is the creator of all things. He is before all things and in him all things hold together. And because in him all things hold together and because he rose from the dead he is the head of the body of the church.

[29 : 06] He is the beginning and the first born from among the dead so that in everything he might have supremacy. And God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things including you and I.

life. Therefore let us continue in the faith. Stable and steadfast. Not shifting from the hope we have in Jesus. That's our call this week.

That's our call today. That's our call this week. That's our call this year. That's our call for life is just fix our eyes in Jesus. Our hope is built on nothing less.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Father we acknowledge that when it comes to creation we bring nothing to the table. We bring no ability to create what you have created or even a fraction thereof. We admit that in fact we have largely ruined your creation.

[30 : 10] We have rebelled against you. We have chosen our own way. We have shaken our fists at you. We have squandered the gifts that you have given us. We have placed the part of the fool. We admit God we are naturally enemies of yours by birth.

We are estranged from you by our own sins. And that we are utterly unable to do anything about it. Yet Lord we praise you that you did not leave us in our sins.

That you sent Jesus to rescue us. We praise you that you created all things by him and through him and for him.

And out of your love towards us you made us a new creation by him and through him and for him.

We praise you and thank you that through Jesus Christ you hold all things together.

together that every breath we take that we can even take because he holds all things together. We thank you for calling us into new life in him.

[31 : 24] Making us a new creation. And we trust that you will hold us together in him. That you will hold our faith strong and secure in him.

That you will hold Kerrigline Baptist Church together in him. That you will hold the global church of all Christians for all time together in him.

Lord may you never let us stray from the hope we have in Jesus. Please fill us with your spirit and cause us to serve you this day as well as this week and with all of our lives.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.
[32 : 25] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. n■m. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.