

What Child Is This? He Is The Lord OF ALL

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[0:00] If you would open up your Bibles to Colossians chapter 1, we're going to be looking at verses 15 through 20 this morning. And as you're turning there, I just want to let you know what my family and I watched last night on TV.

The 1964 claymation classic, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. You know it. Rudolph, with his nose so bright, remember he was a misfit from the start. Yukon Cornelius, do you remember Yukon Cornelius? That greatest prospector of the north. And he's very quirky. And then there was that elf named Hermie. He didn't like building toys. He wanted to be a dentist. Well, the story goes that these misfits are trying to find their place in life. And eventually, Rudolph, Yukon, and Hermie, they come across a body of water to a land of misfit toys.

Odd toys that no child would ever want. Living in exile on the island of misfit toys. The greatest desire of these toys is to be loved by a child.

[1:19] And eventually, Rudolph and his gang, with the help of Santa Claus, of course, they take action. And they reconcile these misfit toys to the children who would love them unconditionally.

Now, I think we can all identify with being a misfit. We've all got our unique quirks, don't we? And we all desire to be loved despite our quirks and oddities.

So we're all misfits in one sense. But we're not misfit toys, are we? Now, God in his word takes our misfitness.

And he takes it one step further than this 1964 claymation special. Yes, God acknowledges our quirks. But God in his word says we have a deep, dark, deadly disobedience problem called sin. Sin is rebellion against God. It's a prideful unwillingness to obey him, to live for him. And so, in light of that, humanity is one big island of misfit sinners living in rebellion to the God who created us.

[2:39] It's also known as the world. Our sin has separated us from the God who created us. Sin ruptured our relationship with the one true God.

And because of our sin, hostility entered our experience. God is hostile towards our sin. And not only was sin affecting our relationship with God, sin ruptured our experience of ourselves.

Have you ever heard someone say, I hate myself? And it's not just within ourselves, it's relationships with other people. Sin ruptures relationships.

Do you know why the holidays are often hard for people being with their family? Because sin has ruptured relationships. And of course, sin has ruptured our relationship with the rest of creation.

Adam and Eve, in the garden, they work the land with ease and peace. But after they sinned, it was toil and hostility, sweat and threat.

[3:52] As sinners, our disobedience to God has resulted in a comprehensive hostility in all of our relationships.

It's got a cosmic reach. But the very God who we sinned against, out of an unconditional love for us, God's plan to reconcile sinners back to himself took a decisive step 2,000 years ago.

I don't know how much the baby Jesus weighed when he was born. Six pounds? Seven pounds? Maybe eight pounds? But when that seven pound baby was born to a virgin in a town six miles outside of Jerusalem, it was a turning point in history.

When that baby was born, God's plan took a decisive turn. What child is this? What child is this born unto us?

If you're looking at Colossians 1, verses 15 through 20, Paul says this is who this child is. Let me read it for us. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, 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.

[5:43] And he's before all things. And in him all things hold together. What child is this? And he is the head of the body, the church.

He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Verses 15 through 20 are known as a hymn that exalts Christ. And Paul has placed it here at the beginning of Ephesians, Colossians, to help this Colossian Christians understand rightly who this Christ is so that they can discern false teaching.

There are two moves, two main parts to this hymn in verses 15 through 20. The first is Christ is the creator of all.

We see that in verses 15 through 17. And the second part is Christ is the reconciler of all. And then we see that in verses 18 through 20. Another way you can say it is this.

[7:03] Christ is Lord of all. He's the creator of all. He's the reconciler of all. He's preeminent over all. He's Lord of all.

Now, this morning I want to ask you a question. Do you know who this child is born in the manger, born in this stable, this dark-haired baby boy, born in some stable for animals in Bethlehem?

Do you not realize who he is? He's the creator of all, your creator. He's the reconciler of all.

He made a way for you to be at peace with God. What child is this? He's Lord of all. Is he your Lord?

Let's look at this first part. He's the creator of all, verses 15 through 17. Now, I'm going to point you to two titles and a handful of prepositions.

[8:06] Okay, you ready? Let's look at it. He is the image of the invisible God. That's the first title. He is the image of the invisible God.

When you read that, that word image, it actually is a translation of a Greek word. And I'm going to teach it to you this morning. It's the Greek word icon. Can you say that? Say icon. One, two, three. Icon. And it is referring back to the Son. In Colossians 1, 13, and 14, we read, God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This beloved Son, he is the icon of the invisible God. Now, back in the day when I was working on my computer, you know, maybe 10 years ago, we didn't call them apps.

What we saw on the computer screen, we called icons, and they were visible representatives of the programs running on your computer. So if you wanted to open it, you clicked on the icon and you got to your program.

[9:10] So it's possible to think here that Jesus is the visible representation of God. He's the icon of the invisible God. And that's true. But it goes beyond that.

Jesus is not just a visible representation of God. He is fully God in the flesh. Just take a look at verse 19.

We read, For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Now look at chapter 2, verse 9. We read this. For in him, Christ, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

The image of the invisible God, the icon of God, is God himself in the flesh. And so how is this being used?

Well, icon is a title. And it's got a lot of similarities with what the passage we were looking at last week. John chapter 1, talking about the Word. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[10:17] That was a title. Word. So when Paul talks about Jesus as the image of the invisible God, the icon of God, he is saying that Jesus is the physical embodiment of all the fullness of God.

He is the invisible God made visible. It would be akin to what John says in John 1.18, where the Word is described as making known the Father who has never been seen.

So Jesus is the ultimate image of God. When you become a Christian, when you put your faith in Jesus, when you turn from sin and turn to Christ, God calls you to become more and more like

Jesus.

to be more and more formed into His image. If you look at just chapter 3, verse 10, you read this. And put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator, the creator being Jesus.

Jesus. This first title kind of unpacks the relationship Jesus has to God the Father. He's the second person of the Trinity.

[11:44] Jesus is the visible manifestation of the invisible God, fully divine, fully human. Now let's look at the second title.

He is the firstborn of all creation. See that? He's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. In verses 15 through 16, there's a repeated word.

It's the word creation or created. He's the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created. And then at the end of 16, all things were created through Him and for Him.

Paul is focusing on the relationship between the second person of the Trinity made incarnate to the rest of creation. And he moves from talking about Jesus as the icon of the invisible God to the firstborn of all creation.

And we've got to be clear on what Paul means by firstborn. Because it's possible that when you read the firstborn of all creation, you can conclude that Jesus, the second person, is the first to be created in all of creation.

[12:59] But that would be a mistake. And that's not a mistake that's just made today by Jehovah's Witnesses, for example. It's a mistake that was made back in the fourth century by a guy named Arius who taught this.

This is a quote. He said of Jesus, there was a time when the Son was not. So Arius denied the Trinity on the basis that Jesus, the Son, was a created being.

And so what he taught became known as the Arian heresy, which just simply means false teaching. And the Council of Nicaea, it's a church council in 325, they denounced it.

And out of that council came what's called the Nicene Creed. And the Nicene Creed is just a restatement of biblical truth for the good of God's people.

And this is, let me just read you a little part of the Nicene Creed. It says, I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made, who, Jesus, for us, men of our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

[14:37] He suffered and was buried and on the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father and he shall come again and with glory to judge the quick and the dead whose kingdom shall have no end.

When Paul speaks of Jesus as the firstborn of all creation, he's not saying that Jesus, the Son of God, was the first to be created of all creation. No, what Paul is doing is he's giving him a title.

He is the firstborn of creation. If you would open up your Bible to Psalm 89, flip back to Psalm 89 and we're going to look at verse 27.

Paul is using this title, firstborn, in the same way that God uses it in Psalm 89, 27 when he speaks of the Messiah.

speaking of the Messiah, God says this, and I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.

[15:53] When God says he's making the Messiah the firstborn, he's not talking about creating him, he's talking about installing him. in the office, with the title of firstborn.

So Paul is using this title, firstborn, the same way that God uses it in Psalm 89, 27. So as the icon of the invisible God, he's not the first to be created, but rather is given the title, the firstborn of all creation.

He's not a created being. He's the uncreated one who creates all. In verses 16 through 17, Paul shows us how the eternal son exercises his supremacy over all creation.

You see that title, firstborn? It means to be supreme over. Supreme over all creation. And here's where I want to show you some prepositions.

You ready? For by him all things were created. For by him all things were created.

[17:07] Now, you might see that word by and you start thinking, oh yeah, it's by Jesus, the agent of creation that all things were made. But, in all honesty, that word by is better translated in.

Like, Jesus is the sphere in which all things were created. And what he's getting at is this. Jesus is the founder and author of all things that were created.

He thought it all up. every created thing in heaven and earth. He thought it up. He thought up black holes.

He thought up supernovas. He thought up cells and mitochondria. All created things seen and unseen come from him.

He's the source of it all. All things were created in him. And it includes angelic beings.

[18:22] In verse 16, we read, he created, all things were created by him in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. Paul's talking right there about angels.

Different kinds of angels. And you might be thinking, well, why is he talking about angels right there? Well, that's part of the false teaching that was happening to this church way back in the first century. There were false teachers teaching these people that not only do they need Jesus, they need angels as well to help them in their pursuit of God.

And what Paul is saying is, no, Jesus is the creator of them all. All created things seen and unseen, including spiritual beings that have been created by God the Son.

All things created in him. And then we read, all things were created through him. He is not only the source, but the means of creation.

He did the creating. All things are created by him. Not only is he like the architect that thought up the plan, he's the contractor who put it into practice, put it into play.

[19:44] He did it. And not only were all things created through him, all things were created for him. You see that? all things were created through him and for him.

Creation exists for the glory of his name. In him, by him, for him. Those are the prepositions I want you to see.

And they all point to him being the Lord of all creation. But then Paul throws in a couple other things. Look at verse 17, and he is before all things.

That word before can mean before like as in preeminent importance, or it can mean before just in terms of time. I came here before my wife came here.

Every time that Paul uses that word before in the New Testament, it has a temporal sense, which means this. He's talking about time. So do you know what he's saying here? He's saying that Jesus is before all things.

[20:48] He's talking about the preexistence of the second person of the Trinity. that the second person of the Trinity has always existed. He is before all things. And not only is he before all things, he holds all things together.

It's getting at the present role of the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, in holding the whole universe together. together. If you flip over to Hebrews chapter 1, the author of Hebrews says this in a beautiful way.

And long ago, at many times, and in many ways, chapter 1, verse 1, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Verse 3, he's the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. Do you want to think of something amazing?

When Jesus was one year old as a boy, he, as the God in the flesh, was upholding the universe with the word of his power. Does that blow your mind?

[22:17] It blows my mind. He holds all things together, and he doesn't sweat about it. It's all powerful. What child is this?

Who is this seven-pounder in the manger? He's the Lord of all creation. He created it all.

In him, by him, for him. He's before all things, hold all things together. But, let me just ask this question aloud.

What, why would he come? Why would he become a man? What's the deal? Why would the second person of the Trinity who created everything take on human flesh?

Well, something went terribly wrong with his creation. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, there were cosmic repercussions of a comprehensive nature.

[23:35] Rupture. Rupture in relationship to God. Rupture in your relationship with yourself. Rupture in our relationships with others. Rupture in our relationship to creation.

All that the second person of the Trinity had created in beauty and peace, sin distorted and made dangerous. So the second person of the Trinity became a man.

He took on human flesh to reclaim that which is rightfully his because he created it all.

even more amazing is how he claims it. His claiming of all creation is a work of reconciliation that is by the blood of his cross.

So when we sing joy to the world, the Lord has come, our creator has come to redeem us as far as the curse is found.

[24:47] Whether that's God's hostility towards our sin, he came to make his blessings flow. In a relationship with others, he came to make his blessings flow as far as the curse is found.

Distortions of cancer on the microcellular level, he came to reclaim it. The cosmic collisions of galaxies that you can witness through the Hubble space telescope, he came to make peace on a cosmic level.

What child is this? He is the creator and sustainer of all things who came to reconcile, to make peace with the things that sin has ruptured.

And so we've looked at he is the creator of all, verses 17 through 15 through 17. Now let's look at he is the reconciler of all, verses 18 through 20.

Again, this time we have three titles in a bunch of prepositions. You ready? Title number one. And he is the head of the church, the body, the church.

[26:13] It's a title. When the Bible talks about the church, we're talking about God's people, God's new covenant people, the people that Jesus has individually bought with his blood.

Those individual people comprise his body, the church. And so what we see happening in verse 18 is Paul making a pivot.

He is pivoting from creation of all things to the reconciliation of all things, the new creation of all things in Christ.

He moves from being Christ, from showing us Christ as Lord of all in creation to now showing us Christ as the Lord of all redemption, the reconciler of all.

So, I think here's what's going on. At the end of verse 17 we see that the second person of the Trinity is holding all things together.

[27:14] And then Paul turns in verse 18 to Jesus is the head in whom the body is held together. The body of Christ, the church, is one of Paul's favorite ways to talk about God's people in the New Testament.

individual, interdependent members. What I love about the nine people that became members this morning, as elders we sat down and we listened to each of their testimonies and we got a sense of their burdens and giftings and it's such a delight to think about how God is going to use these nine for the building up of this local body under the head of Jesus.

Jesus. But here's what you need to know about these people coming to Jesus, becoming a Christian. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul talks about it as a new creation.

When somebody puts their trust in Jesus, the old has gone and the new has come. There are new creations in Jesus. And so his body is a group of Christians, new creations in him that he's brought about.

And Jesus is the head. And when we talk about the head being Jesus, we're talking about authority and source of life. The body, his body, is under and dependent upon the head of Jesus.

[28:45] And so Paul has pivoted from talking about Christ's preexistent work of creation to Christ's incarnational work of making all things new.

Salvation. So that's the first title. He's the head of the body. Now the second title is in verse 18. He is the beginning. The beginning of what?

Now if Paul had placed this title up in verses 15 through 17, we'd be thinking, oh yeah, he's the beginning, he's the creator of all, all things were made by him, and that would be true because it is true.

But Paul didn't place that there. Paul placed this title, he's the beginning, after he's the head of the church.

Paul doesn't have the old creation of heaven or earth in mind. He's got the new creation of all things in heaven and earth. Christ is the beginning of the new creation.

[29:49] He is salvation. And the next title makes that point even further. Look at verse 18.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Now we've already encountered that word firstborn, haven't we? And verse 15, he's the firstborn of all creation.

And what Paul meant by that title is that Christ is supreme over all creation. All things were created in him, by him, and for him. So what does Paul mean now?

Firstborn from the dead? Well, it's a title. And that phrase, from the dead, is the reference to which Christ is supreme over.

He reigns over from the dead, whatever that means. You know what that means? He's referencing resurrection.

[30:48] being made alive from the dead. Jesus is the firstborn of the resurrection and understood as a title.

He is supreme over all things being made new, being brought to life from the dead. Supreme over the new creation from the deadly effects of sin.

Do you remember in John chapter 11, the whole situation with Lazarus? Jesus shows up late to Bethany and Martha has an issue with him. He's like, where were you?

And he's like, well, I'm here. And she's like, well, if you were here, you could have kept him from dying. And Jesus says, well, he'll be raised in the last day.

And she said, well, you can pray to God now and he'll be raised. And Jesus says to her, I am the resurrection and the life. I am the firstborn from the dead.

[31:49] I reign over it. And do you remember what he did in order to demonstrate his authority over death? Lazarus come forth. He came forth.

And if that weren't enough, Jesus said, not only would he die, but he would be raised. And he was raised from the dead. In his own resurrection, resurrection, just verifies his title as being supreme over death.

The firstborn from the dead. In verse 18, there's a word that. He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

His own resurrection from the dead declares him supreme over the dead. to show that in every way, whether in creation or in redemption, he is Lord of all, preeminent over everything.

That's who this baby is. He's the Lord of everything. That he might be preeminent, matchless.

[33:04] Remember that Christ is supreme over all creation because all things were created in him, by him, and for him. Remember those prepositions?

Those prepositions show up again. They show up in Jesus' firstborn from the deadness. In him. Look at verse 19. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Paul is circling back to Jesus' relationship to God.

He's the second person of the Trinity. Fully God. Fully man. Again, chapter 2, verse 9, we read this. For in him, Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

So let me ask you a question. When did all the fullness of God come to dwell bodily? In Jesus. Merry Christmas.

[34:09] It's a reference to the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. But it's in the context of salvation. Christmas is about the incarnation of Jesus.

And the incarnation of Jesus is all about our reconciliation to God. Him making peace by the blood of his cross. Christ is supreme over salvation.

Because salvation is in him. He's the perfect go-between. God and man. Because he's fully God and fully man. That's why he came.

To make peace. To reconcile all of his creation. salvation is in no one else. That's why he came. That's why he came.

That's why he came. That's why he came. That's why he came. No other name under heaven has been given among men by which we must be saved. There's only one. There's only one.

[35:05] Salvation is in no one else. It's in him. Because in him is the fullness of God pleasing to dwell. So we've seen that this reconciliation is in him and it's also through him.

When we talk about reconciliation, we're talking about the reuniting of people. We're talking about the reuniting of two people or two people groups who have experienced disruption.

Do you remember the island of misfit toys? The exiled unwanted toys? Reconciliation took place when Rudolph reunited these toys with the help of Santa to the boys and girls who would love them forever.

Aw. Here we're reading this. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

And that word pleased carries into the next verb. And was pleased to dwell and pleased through him to reconcile to himself all things.

[36:19] Here Paul is saying that it pleased God to reconcile all things through Jesus. Jesus is the source of reconciliation reconciliation and he is the means of reconciliation.

He's the one that brings peace between sinners and a holy God. Now how did that happen? If you look at the end of verse 20, we're told making peace by the blood of his cross.

The reconciliation God brought about came at an extremely high price to God incarnate. He shed his blood on a cross in order to make peace between God and sinners.

To bring shalom, peace to his creation. Specifically to men and women, boys and girls. It's through him.

And through him alone. The separation and hostility that exists between God and sinners can only be removed by the blood of his cross.

[37:28] It's the only way. The blood of his cross. Just to be crystal clear, the blood that Paul is talking about is the blood of the baby boy that was born six miles outside of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago.

That's the blood. blood. It's the blood of the God man. God incarnate shed his blood on his cross. The cross is a reference to his death.

That's where he died. He was crucified as a common criminal in order to reconcile common sinners like you and me to an uncommon God.

It's all part of God's loving plan from the foundation of the world. not only would the second person of the Trinity become a man, but the second person of the Trinity, after becoming a man, would brutally die on a Roman cross.

And he did it voluntarily. He did it for you and for me. He died in our place.

[38:46] It was my sin that disrupted my relationship with God. It's your sin that ruptured your relationship with God.

And because of that, God justly condemns you and me because of our sin to an eternal death. But Jesus, born in a stable, so that through his death on the cross, he could reconcile you and me to God.

He made peace by the blood of his cross. God's wrath poured out on Jesus so that we can experience peace.

No more hostility between God and sinners, those who believe. He's the perfect mediator. Only his death could pay for all your sin and everyone else who would one day believe in him.

And that's all you need to do to respond. Jesus became a man and died on a cross in order to bring everlasting peace to those who believe.

[39:58] And that's how you respond. You can't earn it. You receive it. You receive it as a gift. The birth of Jesus was the first Christmas.

But the greatest Christmas gift that God is offering today is the salvation that Jesus has made available through the blood of his cross. He makes it available to everyone.

Our reconciliation is in him and through him and it is to him. We read that in verse 19. For in him all the fullness, excuse me, 20, in him all the fullness of God who is pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things.

The himself is most likely a reference to God the Father because whenever the New Testament talks about reconciliation, we're being reconciled to the Father. But here's what I want you to notice. It's the scope. It's the scope of his reconciling work. Verse 20, and through him to reconcile to himself all things.

[41:14] All things. Christ's death is his reclaiming of all that he created that was brutalized by the effects of sin. At the cross, Jesus is saying, it's all mine.

I'm reclaiming it. It's all mine. It's the decisive turning point in history in which Jesus comes and reclaims his own and not just sinners, but all of creation.

So the salvation that Jesus accomplished through his death on the cross has a cosmic reach for as the curse is found. So he will eventually recreate the heavens and the earth with the result of a full and lasting peace.

No more hostility for as the curse is found. Joy to the word. So this work of peace which began at the incarnation and was accomplished at the cross, it will culminate when Jesus comes back the second time.

His second advent. When he returns and makes all things right. When he comes to judge the world. Every knee will bow.

[42:23] Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He comes back as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. You see, when he comes back, he will bring peace.

He will pacify all who oppose him. When he returns in righteous authority and judgment, all who were unwilling to bow to him on earth will bow to him then.

He will establish a comprehensive and lasting peace for the entire cosmos. This morning we've seen that Christ is the creator of all and the reconciler of all.

In short, you could say he's Lord of all. What child is this? What child is this in the manger and the stable? He's the creator.

He's the peacemaker. So this Christmas, worship him for who he is in all of his fullness. Your creator came as a man to make peace with you by the blood of his cross.

[43:33] And you know what? That's worth telling others about. Go tell it on the mountain. Let's pray. God, thank you so much for Colossians 1, 15 through 20.

God, thank you that your word gives us a high and glorious view of our Savior and Lord. God, would you press into our hearts a worshipful delight in Christ, our creator and reconciler.

And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.