

Who is Christ

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Date: 14 January 2024

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[0 : 00] All right. Brother Phil, thank you for laying the foundation so well to consider this scripture this morning.

Marvelous. Good selection of songs and scriptures and everything. Praise the Lord. Well, you know that we, or if you don't know, if you weren't here last week or whatever, we have begun studying the book of Colossians.

We're going to go straight through the book. It was the third book written by Paul with the assistance of his friend Timothy, written from prison to one of the churches, this one to the church in Colossae.

And it was a church that, as far as we know, Paul never visited. But one of his disciples had founded that church. And so John filled us in and prepared the way on that last week. Now, as I was preparing for this sermon and came to these incredible scriptures that we have already read together this morning, I thought to myself, this is maybe the most inspiring and magnificent passage of scripture that I've ever preached from.

This is like a Mount Everest in the scriptures. This is one of the great high points in the entire Bible. And as I really thought on it and studied it and meditated and got my words together, I thought, Lord, I can't do this justice.

[1 : 26] I can't. This is the kind of scripture that when you read it, if you really understand it, it ought to rock you back on your heels and leave you with your mouth wide open. It's just an incredible passage of scripture.

And it's not humanly possible to preach it as it ought to be preached. And so what we need to do then is ask the Holy Spirit to come and give us revelation and open our hearts and minds to receive and understand this.

So let's begin then by asking God to do that. Heavenly Father, we're about to look at Mount Everest in the Bible. If it's not the highest peak, it's certainly one of the high points of the entire Bible.

And Lord, we want to understand who Jesus is. And you lay it out so well here. Holy Spirit, come. Help us to see and appreciate the glory of Jesus. Lord, I'm just a man. I've only got a voice. But you are the great magnificent spirit of God.

[2 : 33] Speak to our hearts, oh God. Speak to our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, next slide, Mark. We're going to be talking then today, as Phil has pointed out, about who is Jesus.

And I won't spend a lot of time speculating on that. And Phil has already shared with us some of the many things people have said about Jesus being a great teacher or whatever. So, today's scripture is going to say that, wrong.

He was unique in the entire universe. There's no one else like him. No one else ever been like him. And he is supreme over everything. And so, I'm going to read again that scripture that we all read together earlier in Mark.

The Son, who is the Son? The Son of God, Jesus. So, we're saying here, Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn over all of creation.

For in him all things were created, things in heaven and on the earth, visible things, invisible things, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

[3 : 48] All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things. In him all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning. The firstborn from among the dead. So that in everything he might have the supremacy.

For God was pleased to have all of 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. So, we begin then looking here at verse 15. And next slide.

Another translation in the one I just read or another version of the same scripture there. Is that Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

[4 : 52] He existed before anything was created. And he is supreme over all of creation. So, what does it mean that he is the image of an invisible God?

Well, if I was to pull out a photo of one of my grandchildren. Like Elias, for example. I can say, hey, look at this picture of Elias.

And I have got one right now. I should have put it up there. He lost one of his front teeth this week. And he's got a real interesting grin right now. So, if I was to show you that picture.

You'd say, wow. Looks just like him. Well, what this scripture is saying is that Jesus is the image of God the Father. He is like a photo of God.

He's like a sculpture of God. If you want to know what God is like. Next slide, Mark. And quit talking to Steve and listen to me back there. So, if you want to know what God is like.

[5 : 56] To know what he's like. Look at Jesus. Jesus, by being the image of the invisible God. Is like a window. When you look at anything in the life of Jesus.

You are looking what God himself is really like. God the Father. And so, he is in every way a representation of God.

You know, we're always struggling for illustrations and examples. To help us understand God. Or help us understand the scripture. And no analogy is ever good enough.

Because there's nothing else. No one else like God. And so, I'm going to give you an analogy. It's not good enough. But maybe it will help us understand. Think about all the oceans of the whole world.

You've all been down at least probably. All of you many times. Have been down at least to the Atlantic Ocean. And you sit there and you look out. And you think.

[6 : 54] Wow, I can't see the other side. How big is this body of water? And either the Pacific is twice or three times as big. What if you took all the oceans of the world.

And think about how deep they are. And how many gallons of water is that? It's more than I can imagine. How much life is moving through it. It's more than I can imagine. And so, if we were to say. That represents God. How could we take all that in? How could we comprehend it? We can't. But when you go down to the ocean. When you walk down.

Although you can't. I'll be in the entire ocean. The part you're standing in front of. Right there where the breakers are rolling in. You can't understand that part.

You say. Wow. This is beautiful. Look at those waves. Look at these shells. Feel that ocean tugging at my feet. You can understand that part of the ocean.

[7 : 52] Jesus. Is to God. Like the beach where you are. Is to the whole ocean. In other words. As the beach where you are.

Brings the ocean to where you are. Jesus brings God himself. To you. And reveals to you. Who God is. And what he is like.

He brings God to you. And just like you can wade out of the ocean. And enjoy it. Jesus invites you. Wade out into me. And come to know God the Father.

Come to experience God. God. And the deeper you get into Jesus. The deeper you are in. To God himself. And into knowing God. That's what it means when it says.

That he is the image. Of the invisible God. There is nothing about Jesus. That's not like God. And there's nothing about God. That's not like Jesus.

[8 : 51] Because Jesus is God. God. We read that in John 1.1 a minute ago. We're going to read it again here. Now verse 16 tells us.

That he was the creator. Along with God the Father. It says he created everything that's in heaven. He created everything that's on the earth.

Everything that's visible. Everything that's invisible. And that everything was created through Jesus. And for Jesus. We so often underestimate who he is.

The great creator of everything you see and can't see. That's who Jesus is. Let's just think first of all about the visible things. Okay. So we'll start right here in this room.

Just kind of look all around you here. Okay. Everything you see. Every molecule of it. Every atom of it. Jesus created it. Jesus did it. And then if we could, you know, look out beyond these walls.

[9 : 54] The whole earth itself. We talked about the oceans. The mountains. The clouds. Everything we can see. Jesus did all of that. And we say, man, that is really big. But we've only begun to see what Jesus has created.

So I did a little research this week. To help me understand the majesty of God. So let's consider just the universe. So Mark, next slide. What you see here.

And I forgot that this. Anyway, I'm getting off track from my subject. I can prepare my slides so they come up a piece at a time.

But when we put it in this presentation, it comes up all at once. So what you were supposed to see first was just the earth. And then it was going to shrink and be that tiny dot that's over here on the left.

That is the earth compared to the other planets, which are much larger than the earth, most of them. And compared to the sun. And you start thinking, well, the earth is not really very big, is it?

[10 : 57] And then you think, boy, the sun is really, really huge. Until you begin to compare the sun to other stars that they've seen and studied.

And so then the picture that's on your right there, can you see the tiny little white dot that's the sun? Can you even see it from back there? It's like a grain of sand compared to some of the giant stars, which are like a giant bowling ball compared to our sun.

And so the earth is just so tiny compared to our sun. And our sun is just so tiny compared to some of the other stars. And how big are you?

No wonder David looked up at the sky and said, when I consider the heavens, what is man that you're even mindful of him? So the next picture shows us.

Next slide. Here's kind of our solar system. So, for example, when you saw how big the sun was compared to the planet earth, you've got to think, so when I look in the sky, why doesn't it cover the entire sky?

[12 : 05] It's because it's so far away. The sun is so far away. Now, I've got some scientists in here for sure. Fionic, was it an astronomer you said you're thinking you want to be?

Hey, this lesson is right up your alley, girl. Okay. So, I won't test you on this one yet, unless you know. But somebody tell me, how fast is the speed of light?

186,000 miles a second. I got that hysteria. Think about this. Light, the light coming through that window is going 186,000 miles every second.

You know, we can't quite take that in. So, how far away is the sun from us? 93,000 miles. It takes light going 186,000 miles a second.

It takes the light that's leaving the sun right now eight whole minutes to get here. 186,000 miles a second.

[13 : 22] Eight minutes. How far away is the sun? I mean, we begin to think, good planet. This solar system is ginormous.

And it is. But if we could fly out into outer space a little further and look back at our solar system. Next slide. Would you believe? That little red dot that says that's our solar system.

The little white dot that's right in the very middle is our sun. And this is the neighborhood of other solar systems that our solar system is in.

And so, this whole enormous solar system is one dot in the middle. And there's other solar systems that are around us. And going at the speed of light.

Tell me again how fast does light travel? And say it again, George. 186,000 miles an hour. Second. Yeah.

[14 : 26] The closest other sun or star would take you four and a half years if you could go 186,000 miles in a second. It would take you four and a half years to get to the next closest star.

So, there's a picture of stars all around us. But if we could fly further out into space and look back again. We could take this whole neighborhood. And we would find that that whole neighborhood of stars is way out here on the edge of our Milky Way galaxy.

Out there at the end, it's saying this is our solar neighborhood. It's what that little red letters say. And we're way out here on the edge of our galaxy of stars.

And all of those little dots are clusters of stars that are out there. You can't see it much anymore because we've got too much electric light in the world.

But when I was a kid, you could go outside and look up most any night. And you could see kind of through the middle of the sky a cloudy whiteness. If it was a real clear night, no clouds.

[15 : 33] A cloudy whiteness. And it was because we were way over here on the edge of that flat spiral of stars. And we were looking up through the center of it.

And so, you could see this edge looking through the Milky Way galaxy. You were looking at billions and trillions of stars. And you think, wow, how big is that?

If it takes four years, light years, at the speed of light, just to get from across one of those tiny red letters that you can't even read, how long would it take to get across the Milky Way?

But then if you could fly further out into the universe and look back at our galaxy, you'd see this next slide. You'd find out that our galaxy is in a galactic neighborhood.

And now that whole enormous galaxy that we are has been reduced to that one little white fuzzy spot in the middle. And the red letters say this is our Milky Way galaxy.

[16 : 38] And in vast regions across space, there's other galaxies floating around. In fact, there are billions of other galaxies.

And if you backed up in space a little further, you'd find out that we're a part of a supercluster of galaxies. Ours is called the Virgo supercluster.

And our entire group of galaxies is just right up there where that red lettering is again. And now if we could fly further out into space, we would find out that there's lots of these superclusters of galaxies.

Has your mind already just given up on this? And if you could then fly on out further, you could finally see here is the observable universe, the part they've been able to see with these superb telescopes that they've put in orbit.

And the stars they've been able to photograph. They haven't had time yet to try to name all of them, catalog all of them. There's just too many. There's billions.

[17 : 48] So how big is it? What's the next slide say? How big is it? Traveling at 186,000 miles a second, it would take over 13.7 billion years to travel across the known universe.

Jesus created all of that. Every visible thing. He spoke it into existence.

I don't know what his plan is for all the rest of it out there that we've never even thought about. But here's an idea. Eternity's a pretty long time.

Who knows, your job might be one day in eternity to go explore one of those places. Do something with it.

God must have a reason that he made all that. And we've only just begun. Wow. So, he not only made all the created things, but some of the things we can't see.

[18 : 58] Things like, next slide. We don't actually have the ability to be able to see heat. Well, light energy, we see some of it. There's a lot more frequencies of light that we don't see.

You don't really see electricity most of the time. You don't really see ocean currents. You don't really see nuclear power. You see the effect these have on other things.

So, you know they're there. But they're invisible. And so, all the energies of the universe, God made all of that. All things that are invisible. But then there's a whole spiritual world because it says he made the things in heaven and on earth.

Let's look at some of the invisible things in heaven. And Jesus made millions of angels. And they have different ranks and different authorities. And he sent them out into the universe to do his work.

And there are many of them here in the world. And there are many here in this room with us. They just happen to be invisible. And these are over regions and territories. And they have thrones and powers. And they're all the good servants of God here to help us.

[20 : 07] But we're totally unaware of them most of the time. And not only that, but it says he made the things invisible that are in the earth and under the earth. Let's look at the next slide.

He also created all of the fallen angels who have thrones and powers and principalities over regions of the earth. And so, we often call them demons.

We think of the devil and his hordes. He made them for good. They rebelled. They were cast out of heaven. But what's wonderful and magnificent is that even the devils must bow to the name of Jesus Christ.

They must obey him. They must acknowledge the power of his blood. So that if you, just this week I was rereading the book of Matthew. And Jesus over and over would just, some guy would be filled with a demon.

And Jesus would say, come out of him. Leave him. And the devil always had to obey. He has the absolute authority over everything in all of the earth.

[21 : 09] Amen. He did do one thing that one day we'll understand why it was wisdom. I often think it was crazy.

But God didn't ask me. So, the one thing he did that was odd to me is, of all of the supreme omnipotent power and absolute authority over everything, he took a tiny piece of his authority and gave it to you.

And he said, I'm going to give you the ability to choose. I'm going to give you free will. I'm going to give you that and let go of it.

You can choose to follow me or not. You can choose to rebel or to obey. I give you that one thing. And boy, look at the world and see what a mess we've done with the one little piece of authority God gave us.

We've all been broken by our own sins. And we've all been broken by the rebellion and disobedience against God that other people have.

[22 : 21] So that their problems have also affected and hurt us. And that's the one tiny piece of authority. And I say, Lord, why did you do that? And the scripture says, one day we will understand the wisdom of God, that it was absolutely the best and most remarkable way to do all things.

Well, amazingly, not only did he create all things, but the next slide tells us that what holds everything together is Jesus Christ.

You know, we went way out in space and we looked at bigger and bigger and bigger. If I'd had the time and this sermon could go on for an hour, and I've been accused before preaching that long.

But if we could turn around and go the other direction, we would go smaller and smaller and smaller. And inside of our bodies, we would find another whole universe of cells moving around.

And if we got all the way down to the atomic level, we would see how God has a repeating pattern. Every atom kind of favors the solar system. Every atom looks a bit like a galaxy.

[23 : 34] I mean, he just repeated the same kind of patterns over and over and over. And the strangest thing in every atom. And for those of you that think, you and Matt don't know anything about this.

For my first two and a half years of college, I was a biochemistry major. And in high school, I won the physics award. So I do have studied this before. So anyway, inside of every atom, the protons in there are all positively charged.

They shouldn't stick together. You ever, my grandkids, we've messed around with magnets before. It's fun how they stick together.

But it's also fun how when you put the two positive ends or the two negative ends together, they push against each other. You can't see it. It's one of those invisible things that God made.

But they push against each other. Inside of every atom, those protons should be and are pushing against each other. They shouldn't be clustered together.

[24 : 39] So what holds them together? The scripture explains it. You just read it earlier. And let me quote it to you. In him, all things hold together.

Jesus didn't just create it. We read that he's the sustainer of all things. He is holding the whole universe together. He's keeping the stars where they belong.

The planets in orbit. The blood flowing through your body where it needs to be. Your breathing. Your heartbeat. All of the little digestive things happening. All the little neurons firing in your brain. Jesus planned all of these things. He is sustaining all of these things right now. And holding it all together. And if he was to let go at any minute, all the atomic structure of the universe would unravel and blow apart and come all to pieces.

Now, you know, science has done a lot of work on this since I studied it, which had been many years ago. So I was trying to read a little bit about it this week. And they have come up with some name that they call some kind of an invisible magnetism that holds those protons together.

[25 : 52] And they're not sure exactly what the source of it is. And I said, well, the Bible tells us Jesus holds it together. Christ, that means, is not a distant figure.

He's intimately involved in our world and in our lives. He's with us in the ups and in the downs, in the joys and in the sorrows. He's with us.

We were created by Christ for Christ. In other words, we were made by him and through him and for him. That means that our hearts are going to be restless until we find rest in him.

It means we're going to lack purpose until we find a purpose and a meaning in Christ. We are going to find that only he can satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart.

That's what he made us for. Pascal, the great scientist, said there's in every heart a God-shaped vacuum that only Christ can fill.

[26 : 57] We will try to fill it with everything else. But we were made for Christ and we will never be satisfied without him. And then this verse goes on.

In verse 18, next passage, it says that Christ is the head of the body of the church. Paul wrote about it elsewhere. Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it.

The church then is not a religious institution. It is a living, breathing community of believers. This is not a human organization. This is a divine organism, a living thing.

You are a cell and a part of God's great living church. It's by his presence here that you're able to have the power to serve, the power to witness.

It's by his presence here that we have any unity with one another at all. That we don't all fly apart and fly off the handle. It's because Christ is sustaining us here in his church.

[27 : 58] He guides and directs our mission. He gives life to the church. The church is not a place where you come to worship. The church is this community where with each other we're learning to live out our faith.

And so I need to talk with you about what's happening in your life. And you need to talk to me and help me to grow in my faith. And I need to help you grow in your faith.

And we're all in this together. And that's what the church is. And sometimes it's messy. Amen.

Some others can say amen too. You know, you all know.

Sometimes church gets messy. Things happen. But it's because we're not just an institution. We're not at all a business. We shouldn't follow a business model.

Don't get me off on that. All right. This is not a place either where we just hear about Christ. You say, what did you go to church for? I wanted to hear a sermon. No. This is where you come to experience Christ.

[28 : 58] I always pray. I say, God, today when we go into church, we don't want to just hear a sermon. We want to run smack dab into Jesus Christ again.

I want to be shaken again. Experience again the power of the Holy Spirit. Understand again the glory of God. Understand again the great gospel message that Christ died for sinners like you and me.

I want to experience that every time I come to church. And that's my prayer that you will too. Next slide. As we get on down into verse 18.

Oh, this part's so beautiful. The firstborn from among the dead. Jesus didn't just create life.

He conquered death. Sin created death. God said, if you, I'm giving you free will. If you don't obey me, you'll die.

[29 : 58] Sin created death. Jesus says, okay, I'll fix it. I'll conquer death too. And he came out of the grave. And when he came out of the grave, he opened up for us eternal life.

How do we know we can have eternal life? Because about 150, no, I think it says there at one time 500 saw him alive after his death. There's 500 witnesses.

Five or six of them wrote about it in the Bible. You say, well, why do you believe those witnesses? Because they were willing to die instead of change their story. That's why I believe them.

That's why I believe that John and Peter and Luke and Matthew, these guys, what they wrote. The reason I believe it is because somebody held a sword to them and said, if you don't change your story and say you made it up, we're going to kill you.

And they said, then kill me. But I've seen him alive after I saw him dead. And I can't stop saying that.

[31 : 08] Because I will face him forever. And I'm only facing you for this one terrible moment. And why should I fear men who can only kill my body?

I should follow God who has authority for life of the soul forever. And that's why I believe these witnesses. And when he came out of the dead, out of the grave, it was the promise of a new heaven.

And a new earth coming. My, what kind of God is he? Sometimes I meditate on this. Let's think about this a little bit. When Jesus was creating all things.

At some point he was creating a hill called Golgotha. Right outside of Jerusalem. He knew when he was creating it that one day he was going to be put to death right there.

And when he was creating metal. He knew that one day they would use that metal to make nails to hold him to a cross. And when he was creating the trees, he knew which variety of tree would be used to make a cross.

[32 : 19] That he was going to be nailed to. And when he was making people. He knew in teaching, giving them the ability to speak. And giving them air to breathe.

He knew that one day these very people would be using that gift to shout, crucify him! Crucify him! And he did it anyway. What kind of God is this?

How magnificent is he? To plan things out since before the beginning of it all. And know where it's going. And say, yes, I will do it. And so, next slide.

I love this phrase. He provided the cross. So we can cross. That's in verse 20 where it says, Through Jesus, God reconciled all things to himself.

To reconcile, to bring back together. We who have rebelled. We who have disobeyed him. We who have followed our own path. We who have said, I don't need religion, it's a crutch.

[33 : 24] We who have sinned intentionally in any way. We who have, even at the level of, I disobeyed my mama when I was four years old. Okay? All of these things made me a rebel against God.

And all that Jesus has done is to provide a cross. So we could cross back over to God himself. How did he do it?

And the next slide. And we come to the last verse. He did it by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. We rebelled.

We sinned. God said, the wages of sin is death. Somebody had to die for your sin. I couldn't die for your sin.

Number one, I don't love you enough. I love you, but I've got much. Number two, I've got my own sins. How can I die for your sin when I've got mine? Jesus was sinless.

[34 : 26] That's why he could die for your sin. He had no sins of his own to die for. So he took all of our sins on the cross and was able to reconcile all of creation back to God through that one sacrificial day.

So the Bible then is clear. And this is one of my last slides, I guess. The Bible is clear that Jesus is enough.

He's enough. He's fully God. Made in the image of God. Supreme over all creation. All things created by him.

Firstborn. And he makes us complete. And so, he deserves our worship. He deserves our praise. He deserves our allegiance.

As we were singing earlier, he's worthy of worship. He's worthy of praise. He's worthy. He's all things wonderful. He's the one who is and who was and who is to come.

[35 : 29] He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and that whole long list of names that Phil got us to read together.

He is the supreme, great God of the universe, our Jesus. And so, the last question of the day would be, the last slide, He has come and given a cross so that you can cross, but have you crossed over?

Have you come to God through the supreme Jesus Christ? And if you have not, then why not? And today, you should not leave here without making peace with God.

We're going to have, we call this an altar call, it's just, it's an invitation from God. We're going to sing the last song. Let me talk about that song in a minute. We don't use the word fair very often in English anymore.

Like I don't say, Oh, Jan Fair Maiden. Which means, look at that good looking woman. So when we sing a song in a minute, fairest, Lord Jesus, it means, most beautiful of all.

[36 : 49] Most beautiful of all, Lord Jesus. We're going to sing that song. And as we do, there may be some who would like to join our church. church, we'll welcome you to come forward to join us.

Some who want to come and say, I want to receive Christ. I want to be a follower of His. Some who want to just come and say, pray for me, or I need to be closer to Jesus, or whatever.

We're going to have this time together. Now in a song, all of you will stand, and as they come, I'll lead us in a prayer. Amen. Heavenly Father, what can we say, except we have just encountered your glorious truth in an overwhelming way, and why you love us, we don't know, but you do, and we're thankful.

Now Lord, lead us, be with us, as we sing this song, to know and sense your glory. In Jesus' name,
Amen. Amen.