

The Person of Jesus

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[0 : 00] So last weekend, I was at a conference at Emmaus called Iron Sharpens Iron, which was fun. I got to talk to a longtime mentor of mine from back when I was in my teens and 20s.

Met up with some of my professors, which was cool. They said that they remembered me. I'm pretty sure they were lying. But one of the things that came up, I don't even remember who I was talking to, but we're talking about worship at church.

You know, worship is a controversial topic. There's been church splits over worship styles and battles about, you know, God only intended for there to be an organ. And the drums are the tool of the devil.

And, you know, guitars, you know, we just can't even talk about guitars. I grew up in a church where there were some people who referred to the piano as the wooden brother. And there was these silly fights.

But you know what I love about our church? The church is that I like to be able to hear the worship leaders leading, but the congregation overwhelms our worship leaders.

[1 : 05] And that's a good thing. I've been in many churches where it's a performance from on stage and the people are standing quietly just watching. Worship is meant to be participatory.

We want to engage our hearts, our minds, our bodies in worshipping God. And as we look at the person of Jesus this morning in Colossians 1, I hope that you are moved to worship.

That you see in a whole new way what it means to be a co-heir with Christ. To be a fellow heir, to be his brother.

And to have been saved by Jesus Christ. So this morning, to start off our sermon, I'm going to give you two introductions. I think I've told you in the past when I'm reading a book, I don't like to read the introduction.

And I've learned you really need to because there's important information there. Why they don't call it chapter 1, I don't know. But I read a book recently that had two introductions. Because there were two distinctly different pieces of information the author wanted to convey.

[2 : 05] And that's the spot I find myself in today. So you're going to get two introductions. The first one is we're going to go back to what I talked about a couple weeks ago. That you share responsibility with me to see that this sermon is effective.

The goal of God's Word is not to live between the pages of this fancy leather cover. It's not to look good on our shelves. It's not to be something that we read and then forget about.

It's to be lived out. Paul said that he had a goal for his instruction. Jesus said that in the parable of the soils, that the good soil was the heart that heard the Word of God and put it into practice.

And what happened? They bore fruit. So I have a job. I have to prepare. I study. Spend hours in study to get ready to intelligently and concisely, relatively concisely, communicate the truth that God has given to me over the course of the week.

Your job isn't to just sit passively and listen. Your job is to interact with the words that you hear. To test them. To learn from them and then to implement them. And to help with that, we talked a few weeks ago about becoming faster learners.

[3 : 26] Eliana, if you want to give me that next slide. A faster learner. Remember, that was an acronym that we're not going to go over all of it. Last time, two weeks ago, I told you I want you to forget.

That's the F. Not dismiss. Not to get rid of things that you've learned in the past, but for the moment to forget and take a fresh perspective on the passages that we're studying.

Today, we're going to talk about the A. Give me the next one. The A is to become more active in your learning. The more senses you can involve in learning, the more likely it is it's going to stick in

your brain.

Again, experts say that you'll only remember at best 10% of what I say this morning. We'd like to get you all the way to 11%. And part of the way we do that is to engage you as an active learner.

So act. Take notes. Underline in your Bible. Write notes in your Bible. And then the other part of act is resolve to act on what you've heard.

[4 : 30] Put it into practice. And we're going to talk about that at the end. So that's the first introduction. We're taking another step to becoming faster learners. Now for the next introduction, let's go into our passage for this morning.

So turn in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 1. Colossians 1. And like I've said the last two sermons, I'm going to say for every sermon in Colossians, there is way more material that I can possibly cover in one morning.

And so you've got to spend time in Colossians this week, brothers and sisters. You need to be reading it and thinking about it and seeing the things that I didn't have time to talk about.

And the topic for today is the highest possible topic. I couldn't possibly cover it because we're going to talk about the person of Jesus. So Colossians chapter 1, we're going to start at verse 13.

Jesus, I have to confess.

[6 : 30] I confess that I don't think nearly as highly of you as I should. I read the gospel stories and I see you as a man. I study theology and I see you as removed, but don't really think about you in depth.

But God, you are great. Lord Jesus, you created all things with such intricate beauty. And engineering skill.

And even anticipation of ways that we could use what you made. And Lord, you've made us. And then you became a man. You died for us. You took the punishment that we deserved so that we could have life in you.

God, as we spend time this morning talking specifically about you, Lord Jesus, I pray that our minds, our hearts would be lifted to you and our lives would be fundamentally changed because of you, because we associate with you.

We have friendship with you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, I promised you two introductions. The first introduction was, of course, about becoming a faster learner.

[7 : 48] The second introduction is about words that we don't pay attention to. And I'm talking about words that we use all the time. We just don't think about them. If you think back, when I talked about Colossians 1, just the first couple of verses, we talked about faithfulness.

We talk about faithfulness. We know it's a fruit of the Spirit, but we really don't think about the implications of the relationship with Jesus, which is the root of faithfulness, and how that plays out in all the network of relationships that we're a part of, in our families, in our work, in our neighborhoods.

That faithfulness is an attribute of God that is played out in our lives. We just don't think about that.

And so we focused on that a few weeks ago. I want to encourage you to continue to focus on it.

And then two weeks ago, we talked about the will of God. And we talk about the will of God. We may tack on to the end of the sentence when we're talking about our plans. Well, if God so leads, you know, if God tells us to go in that direction, we'll do it.

But have you really thought about the will of God? It's not something that's trite. It has everything to do with your life, down to intimate details. Now, we get lost in arguments over how God's sovereignty applies, and we forget the fact that God has a plan for your life.

[9 : 10] He has a way that He wants you to live. And it's for your good. But we just say, oh yeah, you know, if God wills it. And we move on. We need to think about what do we mean by the will of God.

Don't just read it. Stop. Pause. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to tell you what really does this mean?

What does it mean to be filled with the will of God? Now, in this passage that we're looking at today, in verse 14, Paul says that in Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Two more words, big theological words. We know what they mean, and we don't give them a second thought because we just think we know. So we're going to pause for a second and talk about what is redemption.

Redemption, the basic definition, is deliverance by the payment of a price. There's a cost involved to our deliverance.

You, if you are in Christ, if you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have been redeemed. You have been delivered because of the payment of a price.

[10:15] Now, the most common usage of that Greek term, there's two of them, one is the payment of a price, a ransom, to release a POW, a prisoner of war.

So, in the Middle Ages, all the way to ancient times, oftentimes the wealthy weren't killed. They were captured because the soldiers knew they could get rich by ransoming the guy that they captured.

You heard the term, the king's ransom? That's what happens when the king gets captured in battle. Whoever captured him, he's set for life. And so are his children and his children's children because they're going to be rich.

It's a king's ransom. They are redeemed when they're bought back. The other example, and think about that. I'm going to pause there for a second. You were captured.

You were held captive by sin. A ransom was paid. But here's the difference. When we say a king's ransom, what we mean is that the captive, the king, is worth a fortune.

[11:20] But as we as believers talk about the king's ransom, think about this. The ransom was the life of the king for you.

That's the king's ransom for us. The price of our redemption. The other usage is people would go to the slave markets and they would buy a slave specifically to set him free.

That's redemption. We are captive to sin. Paul deals with that extensively. We are held captive. We're slaves to sin. And yet because of Jesus' work on the cross, deliverance by the payment of a price, we're set free.

So I would encourage you, take some time to think about, I have been redeemed. I remember growing up singing the hymn, redeemed, redeemed, how I love to proclaim it.

Recognize that you have been redeemed. That you were held captive and a price was paid. And the price was the death of Jesus on the cross.

[12:33] And I want you to hold that thought because this morning we're going to talk about who this Jesus is. Now the other phrase that we commonly take for granted is forgiveness of sins.

Oh yeah, I'm forgiven. Or back in the 70s and 80s there was a bunk per sticker. It still shows up occasionally. Christians aren't perfect, they're just forgiven. Which is really an excuse for bad behavior. People put it on the back of their car so, you know, it's on the back of my car so if I cut you off, you know, I'm a Christian.

I'm not perfect, I'm just forgiven. Well, the guy you just cut off isn't forgiving you. He wants to rear end you. It's not an excuse for poor behavior. It's our hope.

That our sins have been forgiven. I want you to look up here at this next verse I've got for you. This is Psalm 51. And to set some context, Psalm 51 is a psalm that David wrote after he was exposed. For the sin of adultery with Bathsheba and then murdering her husband after her husband wouldn't play along to cover up the sin. So David committed adultery and murder.

[13:45] He was exposed and this is what he said. This is Psalm 51 verse 4. Against you, he's speaking to God. Now he, I would say he exercised his power as king to force Bathsheba, force himself on Bathsheba.

And then he murdered her husband. And yet he says to God against you, you only I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight. So that you are justified when you speak and blameless when you judge.

That's our position before God. With everything that we've done. Even if it's something as trivial as cutting somebody off. I'm not sinning against the guy in the car behind me.

I'm sinning against God and violating his commands, his will for me. Sin is a horrible thing.

We need to recognize that. And ultimately, our disobedience is against God. And it deserves punishment. But look at what David wrote in Psalm 32. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.

[14:55] Whose sin is covered. How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity. And listen to this. You'll recognize what John wrote in 1 John 1.9.

It's almost the exact same terminology. David said, I acknowledge my sin to you and my iniquity I did not hide. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And you forgave the guilt of my sin. That's what we have in Christ. We have been redeemed. We have the forgiveness of sins. Oh, that's nice. What does that mean?

Have you ever thought about what it means to be forgiven? What a blessing that is? David said, how blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven.

Just really quickly. I did a quick Google search. Did you know that being forgiven has significant health benefits to you? Your heart rate is lower when you're forgiven for sin.

[16:00] You're healthier. You take better care of yourself. Cortisol levels in your brain reduce. Cortisol leads to depression and anxiety. There's physical benefits to being forgiven.

There's psychological benefits to being forgiven. There's emotional benefits to being forgiven. If nothing else, it empowers us to forgive other people. There's spiritual benefits to being forgiven. We don't come before God in shame with our heads down. What did the author of Hebrews say? We can come boldly before the throne of Christ. Why? Because our sins have been forgiven. The relationship has been restored because our sins are forgiven. This is not trite, brothers and sisters. This is not something small. This is our life.

And yet, we breeze through these passages to finish our devotions. I'm pointing at me as much as anybody. And we don't pause and think, we have been redeemed.

[17:05] A price was paid. We have the forgiveness of sins because a price was paid so that we can have life.

And now let's turn our attention to the person that bought our redemption. That took our punishment so that we could receive the forgiveness of his father.

Let's look at him. So back to Colossians chapter 1. Now we're going to focus on the person of Jesus for a very specific reason. Eliana, give me this next slide.

This is from a commentary I've been using as I go through, as I'm studying Colossians. This is really important. An intelligent application, or an intelligent appreciation of the doctrine of Christ.

So the doctrine is the study of Jesus in the Bible. Doctrine is a focus on a particular subject in the Bible. And we're talking about the doctrine of Jesus, who he is, what he did, and the implications for us.

[18:08] An intelligent appreciation of the doctrine of Christ is the best safeguard against most forms of heretical teaching. Now if you recall, I told you that the book of Colossians was written to address a growing heresy of Gnosticism.

The idea of Gnosticism is that there's hidden knowledge that's very difficult to acquire. It takes personal sacrifice. It takes giving up things like food that we like.

We have to fast. We have to do all kinds of crazy things. Supposedly to earn God's favor, to get access to this knowledge, we have to have a special connection with angels to help us get to the place where we can access this hidden knowledge.

That's Gnosticism. The doctrine of Christ, studying Jesus himself, is the best defense against that. And you're going to see why. Now, so he goes on. The doctrine of Christ is the best safeguard against most forms of heretical teaching, and certainly against that which was currently threatening the peace of the Colossian Christians.

Now remember, I gave you a modern-day parallel. Gnosticism is alive and well. But a growing heresy actually isn't about knowledge per se.

[19:25] It's actually acquired ignorance. It's this idea of deconstruction. It's people who have been hurt by the church or who have been hurt by God in their opinion, and they want God to give an account for himself.

And so they throw a temper tantrum, to be perfectly frank, and take this Bible and throw it out the window. And they say, I am going to determine my fate.

I am going to determine what's right and wrong. I stand in the place of God. Now, they wouldn't say that that's what they're saying, but their behavior is doing exactly that. They are saying, I am the final say in the way my life should live.

I'm the captain of my fate, the poet wrote. Do you want to go to hell really fast? That's the fast line. You know when you're boarding an airplane, there's a first-class line?

Deconstruction is the first-class line where you get right to the front on a plane that's crashing. The study of the person of Christ is the answer to the pain that leads people to deconstruct their faith, to reject the gospel.

[20:32] And I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, we need to camp here. And as you encounter people, especially younger people, who have been deeply hurt, either in a church, this is a place of healing, but it can be a place of deep hurt, or just by circumstances of their lives, you

need to turn them to the things we're going to study this morning.

You need to focus their attention on the person of Jesus, because that is what will correct the hurt that they felt. They'll be able to see people hurt me, but God loves me, and I can see who He is and how He demonstrates His love for me.

That's the safeguard against this heresy. But trust me, the people who are going down that path are going to hell. They think they're getting out of it by freeing themselves from the burden of what the Bible supposedly teaches, but what they're actually doing is stepping onto a slippery slope that will destroy their lives.

And the way we protect against that ourselves and the people we love is to point them to Jesus. Let them see who Jesus is.

So, who's Jesus? Verse 15. Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

[21 : 55] We're going to stop right there. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. There's two passages we're going to look at briefly. The first one is in Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 through 3.

This passage in Hebrews is an echo of a conversation we're going to talk about in a minute from the upper room discords in John 14.

The unity of the Bible is so fun to watch. How they refer to each other, it's a united whole. And the different pieces allow us to get the fullest possible picture.

So, in Hebrews chapter 1, the author of Hebrews, go ahead and hit that, Eliana. God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers, in the prophets, in many portions, and in many ways.

So, God has always been speaking. Psalm 19 says that the heavens declare the glory of God.

Romans 1 echoes that same idea. We see a lot about God just by looking at creation.

[22 : 53] And then Psalm 19 goes on to say that, yeah, the creation tells us a lot, but we really get to know God in his word. And so, those are the many portions, in many ways, through the prophets.

God has been consistently communicating to the Jews first, but also to the entire world through the Jews. But, if you even take a cursory glance of the Old Testament, you can see that the Lord was perfectly communicating, but the reception was really bad.

We just weren't getting it. And so, the story of Israel is a story of failure after failure after failure. The message wasn't getting it across. God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers and the prophets, in many portions, and in many ways, in these last days.

The last days that we continue to live in. So, this is to us. In these last days, God has spoken to us in his Son, Jesus Christ, whom he appointed heir of all things.

We're going to see that in Colossians in a minute. Through whom also he made the world. Also in Colossians, we'll see that in a minute. And this is the point I want to focus on. Jesus. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory.

[24 : 14] In the exact representation of his nature. We couldn't understand what God was trying to communicate through the, first through the oral tradition of communicating through story.

And then through the written word of the Old Testament. We couldn't, it just didn't get in. So, God gave us a living metaphor. So, we could look and see.

But, actually, metaphor is not the right description for Jesus. Because a metaphor is a symbol that you have to kind of decode and figure out to understand what it means.

But when we look at Jesus, what do we see? We see the radiance of God's glory in the exact representation of his nature.

You want to know how God responds to our sin? Read the Gospels. You want to know how God loves you? Read the Gospels. Look at Jesus.

[25 : 14] You want to see how he responds to the sin of his friends? Read the Gospels. You want to know how to help other people to grow? You know where I'm going.

Read the Gospels. Look at the person of Jesus. Because by looking at Jesus, we know what God would do. Turn up. We're just going to, I'm not going to have you turn there for the sake of time.

But John 14. I've got it right here, so I don't need to turn there either. John 14, Upper Room Discourse. So, it's Passion Week. Jesus has his disciples.

They're in the Upper Room. He just washed their feet. He just gave the command in John 13, 34 and 35 that I love. This is a new commandment I give to you that you love one another. All men will know that you're my disciples if you have love for one another.

The next conversation is he says, I'm going to heaven. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And he says what I described a few weeks ago as the most important statement in the Bible.

[26 : 16] John 14, 6. Because it reveals the character of God. It reveals the character of Jesus. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

Now, if you remember, weeks or months ago, I put a picture up on the slideshow of my Bible. And it had a paragraph and a bold title and another paragraph.

And I talked about the psychological impact of those breaks that are not inspired. And an editor put them in there. And how they cause us to stop a thought that shouldn't have been stopped.

Well, this is another one of those. John 14, 6 is not a Jesus complete thought. John 14, 6 and 7 are the complete thought.

And listen to what he says. This is important. But the fourth thing that he says about himself is the key to this first statement.

[27 : 13] Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. If you had known me, he says to the disciples, you would have known my Father also.

From now on you know him and have seen him. So, when Paul penned the book of Colossians, when the author of Hebrews penned those first opening sentences, both of those men were thinking back to this conversation.

There are those in our culture, I've been saying this for years, oh, Jesus never claimed to be God. I'm sorry. But you cannot credibly read the New Testament and make the statement, Jesus never said, I'm God.

He says at Point Blake right here, if you've seen the Father, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. And then Philip, you would think that Peter would have asked this question because it's so dumb.

Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. It's enough for us. Think back to Exodus chapter 33.

[28 : 23] In Exodus chapter 33, Moses says the same thing. God, show me your glory. And what does God say to him? Nobody can look upon me and live.

I am so great that you'll just be overwhelmed. And destroyed. You'll be undone by my glory. But Philip says, oh, just show us the Father. That's enough. That's all we need.

It's interesting. Side note, in Exodus 33, Moses says, show me your glory. God's response is, my goodness, all of my goodness shall pass before you.

We are the beneficiaries of the goodness of God. That's what God told Moses to focus on. That is what we are to focus on.

And where do we see the goodness of God most clearly displayed? The person of Jesus dying on the cross on our behalf. The goodness of God is the glory of God.

[29 : 33] But Philip foolishly says, oh, just show us the Father. We're good. That's all we need. And I describe this as a hair-pulling moment for Jesus. Just, oh, my word.

Are you kidding me? See, Jesus said to him, have I been so long with you? It's been three and a half years. And yet you have not come to know me, Philip. He who has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative. I'm not making this stuff up, is what Jesus is saying.

But the Father abiding me does his works. So this was a consistent argument that Jesus made. Look, you can dismiss my words, but you can't dismiss what I'm doing. You've seen me heal people.

You've seen miracles. You saw the feeding of the 4,000. You saw the feeding of the 5,000. You saw me walk on water. You saw me still the storm. The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding me does his works.

[30 : 36] Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise believe because of the works themselves. Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

Got that? You need to let that sink in. When you look at Jesus, when you look at the portraits painted of him in the Gospels, you are seeing the best depiction that God could come up with to make himself understandable to us.

In Jesus, God is speaking to us in words of one syllable. That's why Jesus didn't reject worship. Because he was God.

He's the image of the invisible God. Then Paul goes on. He's the firstborn of all creation. Now what he's not saying is that he was the first thing that was created.

Jehovah's Witnesses will say that, well, see right there. Jesus was created. No, that's not what Paul meant. I'm the firstborn in my family. That means that I have a, in some cultures, I have a preeminent place.

[31 : 46] Also preeminent responsibility. And so, I am given extra privileges as a firstborn. That's what we're talking about when it says that Jesus is the firstborn of all creation.

He is above creation. He has a special place of responsibility, of care, and also of blessing. Which in Jewish culture was certainly the case.

The reason the firstborn son was given a double inheritance was because he was given a double portion of responsibility. How many of you that are firstborns can relate to me and say, oh yeah, since my sibling was born, I was responsible for that guy.

Double portion of responsibility. And then, as parents age, who's responsible? Usually the firstborn. So Jesus has a preeminent position.

He is at the pinnacle. Not because he was created, but this is the next step, because he was the creator. All things came into being by him.

[32 : 52] John said that in the first few verses of John chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being by him, and nothing came into being that wasn't made by him.

Jesus was the means of creation. When we hear or read in Genesis 1, God spoke, that's literally Jesus speaking, let there be light.

He created us. So he's a creator. And what did Jesus create? He created the physical universe. Let's look at verse 16.

For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and the earth. Visible and invisible. So we're talking about the physical realm, our bodies, microbes, cells, atoms, stars, all of it.

Jesus created it. Now let's pause. Stop. We so glibly say, Jesus created. You need to take some time and just Google.

[34 : 02] Pick anything in the physical world. And just do a deep dive into how it functions. Take Martha to lunch and ask her to talk to you about how the eye functions. And how it interacts with your brain.

It is unbelievably complex. It's fantastic. And then the way our brain works in conjunction with our eyes. We can't even come close to duplicating that.

Don't have any idea how it works. Jesus made that. He designed it. To work. It's amazing.

You need to stop and recognize the level of engineering skill that our God had to make your eye. Or your fingers.

It's amazing. Or tracing with Kayla the growth of Benjamin. It's amazing. From the moment of conception to the day of birth.

[35 : 09] The process of the creation of a human being is breathtaking. There's no other word to describe it. God designed that.

Jesus created that. Dallas Willard pointed out in his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, something really interesting. And this goes right to the heart of why we need to stop and think about the fact that Jesus is our creator.

We think of Jesus as a good man. We think of Jesus as our savior. We think of Jesus as a philosopher, as a teacher. You know what we don't think of him as?

The smartest human being who ever lived. You think, oh, that's not true. Well, before you dismiss what I said out of hand, do you ask him how to help you fix something that's broken in your home?

Do you consult him about your finances? Not just how much you should give. At this point, as a pastor, I'm supposed to say more.

[36 : 11] I'm kidding. But do you consult him about your finances? How much goes into retirement? How much you give to people? How much you spend on recreation?

Do you consult him? Do you engage him in a dialogue about your relationships? The things that are broken and not working right? Well, the person who created you is certainly capable and qualified to help you.

How would you pray differently if you recognized that our creator was pretty doggone smart? Think about that. The implications of who it is that we have to do.

He was a creator of all things visible, the physical world. But he also created the invisible world. So if you look throughout the Old Testament, you see these different appearances of angels.

We know there's angels. Now there's some, I'll put it in air quotes, Bible scholars who have these extraordinarily complicated structures that they've come up with. Governmental governments in the heavens of angels that I just think, how on earth did you get that stuff?

[37 : 25] From a few obscure verses in the Old Testament. Now I dismiss that. But don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. We know that angelic beings are involved in our lives.

Angels appear to Abraham and Sarah. Angels appeared to Samson's parents. An angel appeared to Daniel and apologized.

Hey man, I'm sorry it took me so long to get here. Daniel agonized for three weeks over a particular prayer request. The angel comes to us and says, hey man, I'm really sorry. But the angel of Persia, apparently there's an angel overseeing the government, opponent opposed me, and I couldn't get past him.

And so I had to enlist aid from a more powerful angel. There was a battle and now I'm here. But sorry man, it took me three weeks. God created that. Did you know, I used to dismiss as kind of a cute thing that you'd see in a Hallmark store, I used to dismiss the fact that I have a guardian angel. I need to read Hebrews chapter 1. You have a guardian angel. God created them. And we cannot forget.

[38 : 42] We have an adversary. A third of the angels were seduced by something that happened in heaven that caused Lucifer to reject God. Some theologians looking at Hebrews 1 have suggested that maybe what made Lucifer mad was God's revelation that he was going to create us in his image and give us a place of preeminence in heaven.

And Lucifer said, oh no, that's my place. And he left. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. But we do know that there was a battle in heaven and Lucifer and a third of the angels left.

And now they're active in this world opposing us. Very interesting. You've heard me refer to Jordan Peterson in the past. He's my favorite intellectual.

I heard an interview where he was talking with a Catholic bishop about evil in the world. And he kept talking about the malevolence. The malevolence did this. The malevolence did that.

And finally this bishop stopped him. And he said, you're talking about evil as a person. And Jordan Peterson, an intellectual, not a Bible scholar, said, oh, there's no question.

[40 : 03] The only explanation for what I have found in my practice as a clinical psychiatrist and in my research about evil in the world, the devil's real.

Don't make the mistake of dismissing him. Don't make the mistake of elevating him to think that he's got ultimate power in your life. But don't forget, the devil is active in our world. And we need to be ready to stand.

But God created him as well. Why? I don't know. That's above my pay grade. But we know he created, Jesus created all things, the physical world, the spiritual world.

And it goes on. All things have been created through him. So we've covered that pretty thoroughly. Here's an interesting phrase, just three words. And for him.

All of it is for him. Not just us, who the Bible teaches are the pinnacle of God's creation, but everything that he made, including the devil and his angels, including people who are, because of their rejection of the gospel, going to end up in hell.

[41 : 15] God created it all for himself. What does that mean? It's very simple. It's for his glory. It's for the glory of God to be displayed.

Moses told Pharaoh, God is going to display his glory through you. Through the ten plagues, God demonstrated his power. Delivered a slave nation from the mightiest superpower of that age. Miraculously took them across the Red Sea. Fed them for 40 years in the wilderness. And then took them to the Holy Land. All that was for God's glory, that God would be magnified. We've been saved for God's glory.

All things were created for Jesus' glory. The proof that Jesus wasn't, that Jesus did in fact claim to be God.

Because a created thing would not accept the glory that goes only to God. And yet Jesus rightfully receives our worship. So now what goes on? So Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

[42 : 22] He's the firstborn of all creation, meaning he made it all. He is before all things. Plato, the philosopher, talked about the uncaused cause. It's interesting.

Plato, who grew up in a polytheistic society, recognized something had to be above it all. Because something, there has to be, you can't endlessly go backwards.

Something had to create what is. The uncaused cause. That is Jesus. He is before all things. He has always existed.

Keep that in mind. He wasn't one of the things that God thought of, I need this. No. God, as part of the Trinity, has always existed. He's the uncaused cause.

He's before all things. And in him, all things hold together. One of the things that I love about scientists is they, honest ones, recognize the limits of their thinking. And one of the big problems in physics is how does this stuff all hold together?

[43 : 31] We don't know. We're really smart. We can make cell phones. We can make a car that drives itself. We're pretty smart. But why doesn't it all just explode and fly into space?

We can't figure that one out. We don't know. And the farther we go into the atom, the deeper we can look, the better mathematical constructs we can create to explain to the universe.

That one little thing we can't figure out. We do not fundamentally know why the universe holds together. Jesus.

Your very existence is a miracle because he's holding you together. Don't forget that. It's Jesus. You are holding together by his power. So now we move forward in verse 18.

He is also the head of the body, the church. And he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything. He's the head of the church.

[44 : 31] Now that's a place of rule. I think that's a primary emphasis. He's the head. He tells us what to do. He sets the marching orders. But I went down a rabbit trail and looked at what does this brain do for this body?

It's a lot. And what's true of my brain is true of your brain. And I think this is a great picture of how Jesus is the head of the church. Now on the one hand, we have the autonomous nervous system, the autonomic nervous system.

It makes sure that my heart beats all the way through the delivery of the sermon. I didn't have to stop and think, breathe. Heartbeat, heartbeat, heartbeat. Breathe and preach. Heartbeat, heartbeat, heartbeat.

My autonomic nervous system just takes care of that. It just gets done. Blood is coursing through my veins because of my autonomic nervous system. It just takes care of itself. Now if somebody pulled a gun and I panicked, well that's part of my autonomic nervous system as well.

That's the parasympathetic. It causes our knee-jerk reaction to things. That's part of how we've been created. And then there's this thing called the enteric nervous system that's our gut that makes sure that our bodies are digesting our food and sending the nutrients where they need to go.

[45 : 48] What an amazing thing our body is. But it's all regulated by the head. Jesus is regulating every part of your life. He is your head.

And He's doing it for your good. And then there's the other side of our brain, the somatic nervous system, which is our voluntary actions. Why they can't just use common English words is a mystery to me. But your choices, your choice of what to wear, your choice of how to drive, your choice of where to walk, what to eat, all these types of things, your brain tells your body what to do.

That's what Jesus is doing. He is your head. He has laid out commands, His expectations of how He expects us to live. And then He works through us to see that those things get done as we submit to Him in much the same way that my body submits to me.

And I use this gesture. I inadvertently ended up coaching a baseball game yesterday. And I'm teaching little boys how to hold a bat. Well, my brain had to learn how to do that, and then I could teach it to these little boys.

That's what Jesus is doing to us. Now, think back to our sermons on our mission. Ephesians 4.16. I'm not going to turn there. But God's goal for us is that we would become more like Christ.

[47 : 06] And how do we become more like Christ? By the proper working of all of us together. That's the means that God uses to make you like Him.

And what controls that? The head. Jesus is orchestrating your life to make you more like Himself every day. As we work together.

That's why we said in the mission statement, striving together to become more like Jesus every day. So the head determines our purpose. It assigns meaning. It creates strategy. We look to Jesus for that. This is our Savior. He's the image of the invisible God. He's the firstborn of all creation.

He's the uncaused cause. All things hold together by His power. He is your head, if you're a member of the church. This is our God.

[48 : 07] Who died on the cross for you. In the last verse. Verse 19. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.

Jesus didn't get, when He became a man, when He was created in Mary's womb. He didn't get a little couple drops of Godhood. He is 100% God and 100% man.

How it works, I have no idea. That's way above my pay grade. But it was God's good pleasure for all of His fullness to dwell in Jesus. When we look at the man Jesus in the Gospels, we are looking at God.

We've got to hold on to that. Now in closing, this is how we're going to think about it. So back in the 2000s, Focus on the Family put out this series that was similar to the case for Christ that we have now called The Truth Project.

It's really well done. It was basically, it looked like the stage was a classroom. And Dr. Del Tackett was doing a series of classes using philosophy and science and theology to talk about what is it that we believe.

[49 : 23] What is the truth? And what do we do with that truth? And the theme of The Truth Project was this question. Go ahead and give me the last slide there, Eliana.

Sorry, guys. Do you really believe that what you believe is really real? What?

That sounds like a convoluted bowl of spaghetti if ever there was one. So listen again. Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?

What difference would that make? I'll give you an example of believing something is really real. If you go out on Dodge at rush hour between the stoplights and just run into traffic and you believe I'm going to get crushed by a car, what you believe is really real because you are going to get hit by a car.

So what do you do? You don't walk out on a Dodge and cross a Dodge at rush hour between stoplights because that would be dumb. Because those cars are really real. What if what I've said this morning is really real?

[50 : 40] That's your assignment for this week. Do you need to think? Is this real? Do I believe it? And if I believe it, it's got to affect my behavior.

It's got to. This isn't just intellectual exercise. This is as real as a car bearing down on you because you're standing in the middle of the road.

And actually, the implications of this are far greater than just being hit by a car. Do you believe that what you believe, what we've talked about from Colossians 1, is really real?

And if you do, you've got to do something with that. And I leave it to you to figure out what that is. Let's pray. Father, we can only pray with the father of the epileptic boy at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration.

[51 : 47] Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Lord Jesus, help us to see you as you are. And help us to change our lives accordingly for your glory.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.