



# Who Is This Jesus Anyway?

[1:15-20]

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*“And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven” (1:15-20).*

Without doubt, our concept of God needs to be expanded. We have difficulty conceiving of a powerful God who can speak the world into existence. When we do somehow grasp something of that idea, we tend to lose sight of the “loving Father” picture of God in the New Testament. If we add to those difficulties the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, it is hard to comprehend God. Paul assists us in understanding some of these deep truths in Colossians 1:15-20.

Into a world where false teachers considered Jesus as someone less than God and someone more than a man, came Paul writing this message. In it, he answered one foundational question: “Who is this Jesus anyway?”

Paul approached this question in three different ways. When his three approaches are brought

together, the completeness and deity of Christ is seen.

## THE QUESTION AND GOD (1:15)

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation (1:15).

After reading this sentence, we immediately think of other passages which speak of Jesus’ likeness to God.

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:8, 9).

For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form (2:9).

We can understand, then, what God is like only by looking closely at Jesus.

Paul used two terms to illuminate Jesus’ relationship with God (1:15). The first word is “image.” Jesus is the “image of the invisible God,” not just a superscription or flat picture like Caesar’s image on a coin. He is a likeness—living and practical. He is an image of God that we can see, study, and understand. Jesus said, “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him” (John 1:18).

The second term that Paul used is “first-born.” He is “the first-born of all creation,” not in the sense of His having been born or created, but in the sense of having priority over all things. God said of Solomon, “I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth” (Psalms 89:27). Solomon was not the first-born of David, but he came to be over all. Christ is supreme. He has priority over all. He is the image of God. He is the first-born of all creation.

## **THE QUESTION AND CREATION (1:16, 17)**

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together (1:16, 17).

He is prior to all things.

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58).

And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being (John 1:1-3).

The pre-existence of Jesus is clearly shown throughout the Scriptures.

He created all things! Notice the word “all” in 1:16, 17. In these two verses that little word occurs four times. It emphasizes the all-inclusive power of Jesus. Jesus was not a “Johnny-come-lately.” He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

He is before all things—before the creation of the world and before time. Christ has always existed. It is true that He took on human flesh when He was born of Mary, but that birth was not His beginning.

“By Him all things consist.” The NIV translates this phrase, “In Him all things hold together.” What keeps this universe spinning in the right orbit, at the right tilt, and at precisely the right speed? Jesus is the answer! He is the Author, Creator, and Sustainer of the world.

In answer to the question “Who is this Jesus anyway?” Paul affirms that He is the Creator of all things, the Sustainer of the universe, the One who is supreme over all. Seven times in six verses Paul uses the word “all.” Contrast His power with man’s limited power. Jesus is neither less than God nor more than a man; He is the very image of God Himself and the Creator of the world.

## **THE QUESTION AND THE CHURCH (1:18-20)**

The question “Who is this Jesus anyway?” is answered in connection with the church: “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything” (1:18). Who is Jesus anyway? He is the Creator, He is the first-born from the dead, He has the pre-eminence over all things, He is the fullness of the Father, and He is the head of the church! What a marvelous declaration! The church does not belong to man. It was not built by nor is it sustained by man. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. Paul said, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). He is head over all things to the church. Man simply does not have the right or the authority to legislate, impose, or to assume authority over the church. Christ is the head!

Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Paul used the marriage relationship to make clear Christ’s relationship to the church. No other organization besides the local congregation is found in the New Testament. No association, no council, no synod, no presbytery—only the local body with Christ as head is seen in the New Testament.

Man wants to govern, to organize to suit himself, to usurp the power, but Christ alone is head of the church. He is “the first-born from the dead.” He was made supreme by His resurrection. Paul said that Jesus is the One “who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness” (Romans 1:4). The apostolic preachers emphasized the lordship of Jesus. Only

twice in Acts is Jesus referred to as Savior, but ninety-two times He is referred to as Lord. Have we reversed that idea? Do we emphasize salvation rather than lordship? Remember Jesus has the pre-eminence.

Through this church, over which He is the head, Jesus reconciles us to Himself.

And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven (1:20).

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

Having been separated from God by sin, man needs Someone to reconcile man to God. Jesus is that Someone!

Notice the means or the manner by which that reconciliation takes place. It is "through the blood of His cross." Can God die on the cross? Jesus is God. Paul has clearly shown His deity. Jesus died on the cross. Therefore, God died on the cross! By the blood of the One who was the

very "image of the invisible God," we are reconciled. To be reconciled we must contact that blood. Jesus purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Thus, to be reconciled by the blood of Jesus, I must abide where that blood resides, in the church purchased with the blood. For me to realize any benefits from His blood, I must be a part of that which was purchased by the blood. The same act that provides the washing away of sins makes one a member of the church that Jesus built (Acts 2:47).

The human mind has difficulty with this idea. How could a holy, all-wise God die on the cross? Yet He did! By His blood all men can be reconciled to God.

## CONCLUSION

Who is this Jesus anyway? He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He was before all things. He is the head of the church. He is the reconciler who shed His blood on the cross and brings man back to God. He was not partially God. He was not somewhere between God and man, but He was God in man . . . the fullness of the Father in a man, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

The question "Who is Jesus anyway?" raises another question, "Have I surrendered to Jesus?" The answer to this second question will determine your destiny.

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# Applying Scripture to Life

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## *A Little Knowledge*

Two lawyers were on opposing sides of a case. During the trial, one thought he would make a great impression on the jury by quoting from the Bible. So he said, concerning his opponent's client, "We have it on the highest authority that 'All that a man has will he give for his skin.'"

The other lawyer knew the Bible better. He said, "I am very much impressed by the fact that my distinguished colleague here regards as the highest authority the one who said, 'All

that a man has will he give for his skin.' You will find that this saying comes from the Book of Job and the one who utters it is the devil. And that is who he regards as the highest authority!"

## *Indivisible*

The authority of Scripture is so rooted in and closely linked to the authority of Jesus Christ that the two are indivisible. To attempt to distinguish them is like asking which blade of a pair of scissors is more impor-

tant or which leg of a pair of pants is more necessary. We know Christ through the Bible, and we understand the Bible through the knowledge of Christ.

## *He Never Saw It!*

Bunyan paints the picture of the man bent double, eyes on the ground, scrabbling among the small dust of the earth, while all the time an angel stood above him offering him a golden crown—and he never saw it, because he never lifted his eyes.