

Is Our Jesus Big Enough?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 February 2015

Preacher: Andy Pearson

[0 : 00] Okay, is our Jesus big enough? Is our Jesus big enough?

Many people, many religions around the world, they believe in Jesus, don't they? So some people see Jesus as a prophet. Some people believe that Jesus is kind of heavenly, if not quite divine.

What about you? What about us in here? How do we perceive Jesus? Is Jesus just our friend? Is he a sort of, I don't know, guardian angel type figure?

Is that how we look at it? Is Jesus, I don't know, is Jesus just a sort of mediator? Is that a mediator between man and God? Is there a sort of messenger between man and God?

Is that all we've got? Is that it? Is our Jesus big enough? Do we have an exalted enough view of the Lord Jesus Christ?

[1 : 03] Well, this morning what we're going to do is we're going to look at what we've just read and what that is really is a hymn of praise to Jesus that we find in this New Testament letter to Colossians.

And let us not undersell this portion of Scripture. There's a guy that a scriptural commentator, a guy called F.F. Bruce, he calls those verses, he says with those verses that they are the greatest or one of the greatest Christological passages in the whole of the New Testament.

Do you know what? The dude is not wrong in any way. I mean, these verses are majestic. This is awesome stuff.

And as close as we can, the structure of the sermon this morning is kind of just going to try and follow the flow of Paul's thought.

What does that mean? Excuse me, in reality what it means is we're going to take the sermon and we're going to split it into two.

[2 : 09] And first of all, we're going to consider Christ as supreme over creation before we go in and consider secondly that Christ is supreme over reconciliation.

So Christ is supreme over creation. Christ is supreme over reconciliation. That's the way that Paul arranges the material in Colossians 1. So that's what we'll do. OK.

So I'll say to you just now what I say to you, the congregation in London every Sunday, if you have got a Bible in front of you, if you'd please turn back to those verses that we read.

If you've got that in front of you in Colossians chapter 1 from verse 15. And let's consider that first heading. Does it mean that Christ is supreme over creation?

And really what we're going to do in this first heading is try and answer three very simple and basic questions about Jesus' relationship to creation.

[3 : 14] OK. And the first of these questions is who is this creator? Who is this creator?

OK. I don't know if it's the same in Edinburgh. But in London, my fair city of London, there are sort of portable bookstalls appearing all over the shop.

Especially in the centre of London and the city of London. I don't know if it's the same in Edinburgh. But every street corner you turn, there is a portable book stall and there's people standing there and they're selling a book or they're handing out a book and it is called What Does the Bible Really Teach?

You've seen this? And it's Jehovah's Witnesses handing out this book. Now here's the thing. If you were to get into a conversation with a Jehovah's Witness about Jesus Christ, get this, one of the very first places they are going to take you in scriptures where?

It's the very first verse that you've got in front of you here, verse 15. Let me read it to you. It says, he is, so speaking about Jesus, the Son of God, he is the image of the invisible God.

[4 : 39] Now get the next bit. He is the first born over all creation. So Jehovah's Witnesses come to you, knocked on the door and they've said, well look, it says Jesus is the first born over creation.

So Jehovah's Witness is going to say, do you know what that tells us? That tells us that Jesus is a created being. You see? They will say that he's the first born.

He's a created being. Now that's a bit of a problem, isn't it? How do we as Christians, how do we respond to that? How would you respond to that if they've come to the door and they've said that to you?

I'm hoping that you would respond by saying, well actually he's wrong. In fact what you might say is that it's kind of exegetical lunacy to think that that is what Paul, that Paul is saying that Jesus is a created being because look at the next verse.

Listen to what Paul goes on to say. He says, yes, that Jesus is the first born over creation. Then he goes on to say, for by him all things were created.

[5 : 51] You see the inconsistency there, just see how it's a lunacy. How can Jesus be a created being? And then the next thing Paul says, and Christ has created all things.

He did have to create himself. It doesn't make any sense. So Paul's not saying that, but if that is not what Paul is saying, what is Paul saying here?

Think Genesis. Think about Abraham. Think about Jacob and Esau.

Remember that all the way through the Old Testament, what was the first born son? The first born son is the special child, isn't he? The first born son is the one with status, isn't he?

I mean, he is the one with rights, the first born son, the one with honor, the one with a future. Do you see that that, do you see the magnitude of what Paul is saying?

[6 : 54] He's saying that about Jesus. He is saying that Jesus is the one with status over all of the rest of creation.

He's saying that Jesus is so grand, so majestic that he is the one that has the whole of the inheritance of creation coming to him. Do you see it?

See how marvelous it is? Jesus Christ truly is the one with honor. He is the first born over all creation. But we still got a problem because the Jehovah's Witnesses are still at the door and they say, yeah, okay, we accept what you say about the first born son.

It means that Jesus has such a status. But they also say, look at the verse, verse 15. They say that Paul also says here, Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

And a Jehovah's Witness is going to say to you, an image is not the same as being the real thing. Jehovah's Witness is going to say, no, an image means a copy.

[8 : 09] Means that Jesus isn't truly God. Here's the thing though, what we have to remember is that we have to be absolutely careful with biblical language, don't we?

And it's true, no one's going to argue here that in English, in English, this word image has sort of the connotation of being a copy of something, doesn't it? An image of something, a representation of something really.

That's true in English, isn't it? It's not true in Greek. It's not true in the language that this was written in. See this word here, this idea that Jesus is the image of God.

It actually means, wait for it, it means the revelation of God. Do you see it? The policy here is that this Jesus that we worship, this Jesus that we are speaking about here today, he truly is the revelation of God.

That this Jesus, the one that we worship, he is where the invisible God becomes visible. He is where the Creator has burst into creation.

[9 : 25] Do you see this with me? I mean, these words here are not written to in any way, lessen or diminish the eternity of the one that we worship.

These verses, Paul is writing these verses to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. So who is this Creator? A second question we've got to consider here though, I think, is what it is that Christ is created.

What do we learn here about what Christ is created? And I guess if we were feeling really lazy on our Sunday morning, we could just answer that by saying, what has Christ created?

Well, I could just read verse 16 because it says, you know, by him all things, he created all things. So if we're feeling lazy, let's just leave it there.

But let's not. Because here, Paul is making a very, very important point and I think to grasp it, you and I have to know at least something about the background or what's going on in this letter to the Colossians.

[10 : 33] Paul's writing here. He's writing to a church that's been recently established. So you've got to realize that these are not mature Christians that Paul's writing to and there's a problem going on in that congregation.

So he's writing to a church that's full of false teachers. So he's writing to people, Christians who are being taught, ready for this? They're being taught, yes, you need Jesus, but you need more than Jesus.

Yes, you need Jesus, but you need lots and lots of other spiritual experiences on top of that. And so wait a minute, when we can, when we understand that, do you see what it is that Paul is doing here?

Paul is writing to these Christians that he cares about and he's saying, no people, no. Brothers and sisters, you only need Jesus.

That everything else, all other spiritual experiences, everything else is beneath his name. Why? Ah, verse 16, because he has created everything else.

[11 : 43] Do you see it? That Jesus Christ stands supreme. He stands above every other spiritual experience that anyone, the whole world can offer.

Anything that these false teachers could offer these Colossians. No, Christ has created all things. He stands above this. And I hope this morning that you can see how that helps us in our Christian life.

Do you see how that helps you this morning? You see, what it does is remind us this morning that it is, and I mean this to Christians here, it is absolutely fruitless and pointless for us to look somewhere else for spiritual satisfaction.

Is that a temptation that you have just now to look somewhere else for spiritual satisfaction? No, I mean this reminds us that having created everything, having created all things, that do you see it that Jesus Christ is the only remedy for your spiritual drought?

He is the only remedy. He's the creator of all things. He's the only remedy for your spiritual drought. And I would say if you are someone who is not a Christian and here today for whatever reason you are in here, please see how exalted, how great this Christ is.

[13 : 13] He has created all things and that means that he is the remedy for your spiritual despair.

So who is this creator? What has he created? A third question I suppose we've got to ask is, well, what impact should this have on us?

Like, what impact should Christ's exalted status over creation have on you and I this morning? I don't like it when ministers sort of make it really personal in a sermon, you know.

I always feel a wee bit awkward, but I'm going to do that just to make you all feel awkward just now. You know, I've studied these verses quite a few times and every time I read them, I guess I feel rebuke to a certain extent, you know, I feel kind of chastened by God.

I think part of that is because of our sin and what we are like. There's a tendency that we reduce Jesus in our affections, don't we?

[14 : 20] And over time, if we are not worshiping as we should, we reduce, we diminish what Jesus is actually like and then you come back to these verses and you see it fresh and you see, what a God, what a God we have as part of it.

But I'm also rebuke in another way because I read these verses here and I am convicted by the default view that I have of my own life as a Christian.

I wonder if you see what I mean by that. Like I think, and you can correct me if I'm wrong afterwards, I think there's the temptation that even as Christians we think that Christ has created this world for us.

You think that sometimes, you know, that Christ has created all of this and He's done it for His people. Now, of course there is truth in that.

But what I want you to see is that is a totally insufficient view of understanding your life and understanding the world because look at what Paul says here in verse 16.

[15 : 35] Then he says that the world was created by Jesus but what does he go on to say? Verse 16, he says that the world was created, what's that word?

For Him. Do you see that? That let us think in that the world was created for Jesus. Do you see what that means?

Do you see that this Christ is so exalted and so majestic that all of this, you know that the heavens and the earth and the plants and the animals and all of humanity, everything was created with the purpose of what?

With the purpose of honouring Him, of honouring Jesus. Now I wonder, do you see what that means for your life just now?

Tell you what it means. It means that not just the spiritual stuff in your life is about Jesus, you know, the reading and coming to church on a Sunday morning and praying.

[16 : 40] No, it means that absolutely everything in your life is to be about this exalted Christ.

It means that your family, your family exists so that amongst them you can try and honour the Lord Jesus Christ.

It means that your daily work, it means that your spare time, all of that, that exists so that they are in there, you can try and use that for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Do you see this? I mean, do you see how massive it is, how big it is? Doesn't it just lead us just to pause, to marvel?

Doesn't it just lead us to resolve to live for this Jesus in all things? A God for whose honour all creation has come into being.

[17 : 49] So we see Christ as supreme and he is supreme over creation. Then what happens here is that Paul kind of moves in a second theme.

So we've seen Christ as supreme over creation. Turn us to consider now Christ as supreme over this word reconciliation, which we'll look at just now.

And here we look at three sort of questions in that first heading. Don't worry, we're not going to do that again. What we're going to do is look at just two things here about Christ and reconciliation.

The first of which is this. Let's think about Jesus reign over the church. I don't know if you have kid's talks since he's now and again.

We do in London now and again. I'm sure you've heard it. It's quite a common kid's talk will be when a minister, let's say a guest minister comes along and you know what they do.

[18 : 48] They sort of invite the kiddies to the front and the kids will sit down. You'll have heard the kid's talk where the minister will sort of use scriptures comparison of the church and the human body.

You'll have seen that sort of thing. The minister will show the children a picture of an ear and then you show them a picture of some toes and a leg and you'll make the point that the church is like a body.

There's lots of different parts, different functions, but they're all working together. You've seen that kid's talk, I'm sure if not. There's one for you, Derek.

What we've got to see here is that when Paul in these verses is speaking about Jesus as the head and the church as the body here, what I want you to see is that idea of inter dependence, that is not what Paul is talking about here at all.

No, when Paul here is talking about Jesus as a head and the church as the body, the emphasis, the point that he is making is on the sovereignty of Jesus over the church.

[20 : 10] Now I'm pretty sure you see how that works, don't you? Paul is saying that just as a head would do over the body, that Jesus directs his body the church.

And this is important about the function of a head. What does Jesus do? Jesus provides the vision for a church, that Jesus provides the word for the church, doesn't he?

That Jesus stands high above the church. It's a head would do direct and look at what he says in verse 18, he says, oh, it's our word again. Look at this verse 18.

Jesus is the firstborn from among the dead. So that just as he had the sovereign status of the firstborn over creation, what we're seeing here is that Jesus has the sovereign status of the firstborn over the resurrection over the church.

Did you see the point, Jesus sovereign, his head over the church. And there's an important implication of that.

[21 : 20] And I want you to think about this because I'm going to suggest that what we're seeing here is a problem for St. Columbus. And I say that because it's a problem for all churches.

You see, many of you are going to be familiar with the name Mark Driscoll. You've heard of Mark Driscoll. I'm sure some of you will have.

Mark Driscoll is a pastor of a mega church. And I think it was the Northwest of America. And I said he was the pastor because quite recently that guy, Mark Driscoll, has had to resign and step down.

It was alleged and I have no comment to make about Mark Driscoll. I don't know the ins and outs of it, but it was alleged that this guy, Mark Driscoll, had almost sort of been sort of dictatorial in the life of the church, you know, that he had been kind of authoritarian and sort of governing with a pretty heavy hand over the church.

Now I think what could happen is we could sit here this morning and we could judge Mark Driscoll for that and sit in judgment over his behavior. But isn't it true?

[22 : 40] Isn't it the case that that is actually what we are like in the life of the church? Isn't it true that we can try and shape our congregations to try and fit the way that we want things to be done in the life of the church?

We can try and ensure our ideas are imposed on the congregation. We can do that by huffing. We can do that by being maybe too assertive.

We can do that by quietly trying to instigate a mutiny. But do you not see what Paul is saying in these verses? She makes us absolutely disgusted by that idea.

Because what Paul is saying here is that Derek is not the head of this church. Paul is saying he is not the elder. They are not the head of the church. Do you know what Paul is saying?

Paul is saying that you are not the head of the church. Paul is saying that somebody much greater is the head of this church. He is saying that Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, he is the head of this church.

[23 : 51] He is the head of St. Columbus. And that is marvelous, isn't it? But it does mean that sometimes we are going to have to take our pride and we are going to have to put it on the shelf.

Sometimes it means that we are going to have to say, I want things to be done like this. But I accept that it is not the will of my Savior, so I give it up.

Do you see this, friends? Do you see how majestic Jesus is? And do you see that that means that needs to be a new humility amongst the new humanity of Christ?

Why? Because it is Jesus who is head of His body, the church. So we are looking at Christ's supreme over reconciliation.

We have seen that He reigns over His church. There is just one thing, one last thing that I want us to consider. And it is the fact that let us consider Jesus reign over peace over peace.

[24 : 59] Okay, I will give you something to think about. There is an implied disaster in these verses of Scripture.

I wonder if you see what I mean. There is an implied disaster. Do you see what it is? Paul talked at the beginning, talked about creation.

There is a lot of talk in the verses about creation. Then towards the end here, Paul talks about the repair of creation.

So do you see that there has been an implied disaster? Somewhere along the line, creation has faced a catastrophe. Somewhere along the line, creation has faced a rupture.

Now, if you are a Christian, you know what that is. What is the disaster that creation has faced? Well, you know that Adam has fallen and that that has not just brought sin to you, that that has affected the whole of the created order, that in the garden that fall affected everything.

[26 : 08] You know, affected everything, everything in creation, everything you see now. Everything is in bondage.

And in these verses, Paul is just telling us how that almighty disaster is repaired. Look what he says. It's awesome. We are told that God has reconciled the created order to himself by making peace with it.

How has he done it? Verse 20. Come on, as I thought, isn't it? Verse 20, he has made peace through the blood of Jesus.

Now, come on, we hear this in church all the time. We hear talk of the cross. We hear talk about the spilt blood of Jesus. But wait a minute.

I mean, think about what we've just seen. We have seen an almighty picture of Jesus Christ in these verses. And what Paul is saying is that to repair the damage caused by the fall, it is that Jesus.

[27 : 17] It is not just some guy, it is this Jesus, this exalted Jesus, this created, this creator rather, this creator Jesus that has willingly, voluntarily, undergone the humiliation of going to the cross.

What I thought that is. But as we close, all I want to do is just highlight just a couple of encouragements for you to take away into your week ahead.

Just think about these. We are told that this work of reconciliation is work of making peace. It has already happened.

Verse 19 says that God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things. You see what that means?

It means that reconciliation has already taken place. It means that peace with God has already been made.

[28 : 23] That through the cross, God has put into motion this unstoppable chain of events that will inevitably result in the restoration of all things through Jesus Christ.

Now I wonder, do you see what that means for you and I as Christians? If this has happened, if peace has already been made, if reconciliation has already been made, do you see that it means there is nothing that you can do as a Christian to add to it?

Two thousand years ago at the cross of Jesus Christ, peace was made, reconciliation happened. All we do is repent and believe there is nothing you can do as a Christian to add to that marvellous, marvellous work.

And then the second source encouragement and I tell you what will end with this is draw it, draw it into land with this. We are told here that all things are reconciled.

We are told that what I'm speaking about this morning and what Paul's writing about here, this affects you. Why?

[29 : 47] Because it affects everyone and it affects absolutely everything that God has, what does he say, through the cross reconciled all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Now we might ask, well hang on a second, is that teaching universalism? Is that teaching that every single person is going to be saved? Of course that's not what he's saying but it does mean and I urge you to hear this, that either through as the people of God a sort of humble willingness or through force every single knee is going to bow and one day all creation is going to be reconciled to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And isn't that at least something to consider as we go to the table? Isn't that that because of the cross we are going to see the reconciliation of the whole created order through Jesus.

We are going to see that that because of the cross that there's going to be a day where the people of God are, we are going to rise to him and we are going to abide with him and we are going to live for him in eternity.

That because of what we are remembering here, because of the cross that the people of God will see that day when the curse of creation is finally lifted and we are going to see everything and everyone bow in wonder and worship our King.

[31 : 46] My friends when you consider that surely we all ask ourselves is our Jesus big enough? Do we have a big enough view of Christ because this Jesus, the Jesus of Colossians chapter 1, he is mighty, he is exalted, he is supreme.

So I suggest that we all just now bow to him and wonder and humble adoration because quite simply what a God, what a God we are.

Nice prayer. Father in heaven we do ask you for forgiveness and we do diminish you and we know in our heart of hearts that we do not have as mighty and as exalted a view of Jesus Christ as we should.

But Lord God we thank you for sending your Son. We thank you that the agent of creation Jesus Christ was willing to humble himself and out of love to die in the cross.

We thank you that the Creator has not just burst into His creation but He has burst into His creation to be killed and killed for us.

[33 : 17] And Lord we marvel at that, we thank you for that and we pray in our Savior's name. Amen.