

Colossians 1:15-23

**Who is Jesus?**

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Who is Jesus? Our big question for today is “Who is Jesus?” But I can’t just invite Jesus up on stage to ask him. So how can we find out who Jesus is if he’s not here? If you wanted to know me, but I was away, what would you do? You might go on Facebook and stalk my profile photos. Or you could call my wife Monica and ask her about me. Or you could search any documents that are available about me. You could look up newspaper articles or my writings. Maybe you’d try and find my original birth certificate.

Today we’re going to look at something similar to Jesus’ birth certificate. First century Palestine didn’t give out birth certificates when babies were born. But about 20 years after Jesus’ ministry a man named Paul wrote who Jesus is. He had actually met Jesus after Jesus died on the cross and rose again. He wrote a letter to a church called the Colossians about who Jesus is. He wrote so that they and us today could know who Jesus is. Paul tells us three things about Jesus in this letter. First, Jesus is the God who created all things. Second, Jesus is the God who restores broken things. Third, Jesus is the God who makes all things new. Paul tells us all these things in Colossians 1:15-23. So who does Paul say Jesus is?

**First, Jesus is the God who created all things. (1:15-17)**

Jesus is the God who created all things. (1:15-16) Verse 15 says, “Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we read about the creation of the world. Genesis says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” God created everything—stars, suns, the world, animals, you and me. Notice how similar the first verse of Genesis is to our next verse in Colossians. Colossians 1:16 says, “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth...” This means that God, through Jesus, created the whole universe. This means that Jesus has been around forever because he is God. This is what it means that Jesus is the “firstborn of all creation.” It means that Jesus was there when it all began. Jesus is the God who created all things.

We can know the God who created all things through Jesus. (1:15) Remember verse 15 says “Jesus is the image of the invisible God...” The Genesis passage also says “God created man in his own image.” (Gen 1:27a) The Bible tells us God is spirit and nobody can see God. (John 1:18, 4:24) But it also tells us that Jesus is God. You can see God when you see Jesus. We get a picture of God today through the Bible. The Bible is kind of like an United States one dollar bill. Do any of you know who is on the U.S. one dollar bill? The image of our first President George Washington is on this bill. From this dollar we get a picture of George Washington. From the Bible we get a picture of Jesus. From the picture of Jesus we get a picture of God. When we get to know Jesus, we get to know God. We can know the God who created all things through Jesus. So this news has a big impact on us today.

Since Jesus created everything, everything is about Jesus. (1:16-17) Verse 16 says, “All things were created through him and for him.” This is a fancy way of saying that everything is about Jesus. Everything that is visible is about Jesus—the earth, sky, animals. At the same time this also means that everything is not about us. Astrology says the stars and suns and planets are all about you. But the Bible says the stars and suns and even the earth are about Jesus. The Bible even says that everything that is “invisible” is about Jesus. This means angels and demons fall down and worship him. Jesus is more powerful than anything that goes “bump

in the night.” This means you don’t need to be afraid of demons, witchcraft, or fortune tellers. Jesus is more powerful than all of these things because he created everything. Verse seventeen also says, “...in him all things hold together.” Jesus is the reason why we exist and why we live. Jesus is not the God of the agnostics. He didn’t just create us and walk away. He is right here right now keeping everything going. Is Jesus the main thing in your life? Is everything about you or is it about Jesus? Today can be the day when you make everything about him. Since Jesus created everything, everything is about Jesus.

First, Jesus is the God who created all things. **Second, Jesus is the God who restores broken things. (1:18-20)**

Jesus is the God who is not against us but for us. (1:18) Maybe some of you think if Jesus knew who you were, he wouldn’t like you. You know that if Jesus saw your heart, he would be ashamed of you. But the funny thing is, although everything is about Jesus, Jesus is about us. Jesus is God and God cares for you. Verse 18 says Jesus cares for us two ways. First, he cares for us by rising from the grave. He died and rose again so that all who believe in him might live. Second, he cares for us by giving us the church. He gives us brothers and sisters in Christ to love us. Some of you don’t yet know the joy of having a family in Christ. Jesus gave us the church so we can learn how much he loves us. And so that we can learn to worship God as he deserves. Jesus is the God who is not against us but for us.

Jesus is the God who is for us and with us. (1:19) Verse 19 says, “For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell.” This is another way of saying God lives in Jesus. The very essence or nature of Jesus is divine. The great news is that Jesus has come to live spiritually in us. Through Jesus God can come and make his home in you. (1 Cor 6:19) When this happens you do not become divine but you do become holy. I shared earlier that the image of George Washington is on a one dollar bill. Although this dollar is not George Washington himself, it does have his picture. Raise your hand if you would like to have this dollar bill (\*Give \$1 away. Ask name.). George Washington now dwells in your pocket. You are now one dollar richer than when you showed up here. By asking Jesus to come and dwell in our hearts, we receive a similar gift. When Jesus comes into our lives, we become spiritually rich. But we don’t become just one dollar more rich. It’s like God has come and said, “Here’s a billion dollars.” Today your soul can become more rich than you ever thought possible. You can share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the God who is for us and with us. So how does Jesus come and make his home with us? I’m so messed up and hurt I don’t deserve him to come and live in me.

Jesus is the God who restores broken things. (1:20) We’re all broken whether we like to admit it or not. Our relationships with our brothers and sisters and parents are broken. Our friendships with kids at school or our neighbors are broken. These relationships are broken because our relationship with God is broken. Our relationship with God is broken because we all sin against God. We act as if everything is about us instead of him. This selfishness is sin. But Jesus is the solution. Verse 20 says Jesus made “peace by the blood of his cross.” Someone had to pay for our sins, and Jesus chose to pay for them. It’s like if I were to punch my translator in his face and break his nose. Someone would have to pay for him to get a shiny new nose. Either he, myself, the hospital, or the government would have to pay. Someone would have to pay for my wrong doing. Jesus offers to pay for our wrong doing. But the only way he could pay is through the cross. He had to take the consequences of our sin by dying in our place. By dying in our place Jesus heals the hurt between us and God. Jesus restores our broken relationship with God through his cross. Jesus is the God who restores broken things.

First, Jesus is the God who created all things. Second, Jesus is the God who restores broken things. **Third, Jesus is the God who makes all things new. (1:21-23)**

Jesus is the God who rescues those who don't want to be rescued. (1:21) Verse 21 says we were once "alienated" from God. This means that we can't get to God's homeland. We can't get to heaven no matter how good we act or hard we try. Our team has come from Boston to visit you in France. Now what if we have such a good time we lose our Passports? When we would try and go home, they wouldn't let us back in the U.S. The border agents would think we're aliens who don't belong. But we would know that Boston is our home and we need to get there. The reason we can't return home to God is because we've lost our holiness. But God has provided a passport of holiness through his son Christ Jesus. Jesus can give you his holiness so that you can come home. But we actually don't want to go home because we don't like God very much. Verse 21 says we are "hostile in mind" and we do "evil deeds." This means that our minds and wills are against God. You are a natural born enemy of God. You have a heart that doesn't like Jesus. But Jesus loves you and has provided a plan of salvation. Jesus is the God who rescues those who don't want to be rescued.

Jesus saves those who don't deserve it because of who he is. Jesus is the God who makes all things new. (1:22) Verse 22 says we are now "reconciled" to God by Jesus' death. Jesus' death makes enemies of God friends of God. Jesus actually comes before God with you. You would have stood before God full of sin and guilt. But when Jesus stands with you, you become a new creation. Jesus presents "you holy and blameless and above reproach before him." When Jesus makes you holy, he separates you from your sin. When Jesus makes you blameless, he washes you spotless before God. When Jesus makes you above reproach, God no longer holds your sin against you. If our God is for us, nobody can stand against us. You may now live free from guilt because you are forgiven. Jesus is the God who makes all things new.

Do you want God to make you new? Do you want Jesus to make you holy, blameless, and guilt free?

Jesus is the God who wants to give you everything if you'll only trust him. (1:23) At the end of his letter, Paul calls the Colossians to continue in their faith. Paul also calls us to also place our faith in the gospel. The gospel is the good news that Jesus made peace with God for us. If you believe in this good news you will be able to stand through all of life. You will be able to stand in the midst of suffering and pain. You will be able to stand in the midst of a broken world. You will be able to stand because Jesus stands with you. Jesus is the God who wants to give you everything if you'll only trust him.

First, Jesus is the God who created all things. Second, Jesus is the God who restores broken things. Third, Jesus is the God who makes all things new. You now know who Jesus is, but does Jesus know who you are? I gave out a dollar bill to show you how Jesus can come and be with you. God himself can come and make his home with you. If you believe in him, you'll never have to walk through life alone again. I had you raise your hand if you wanted a dollar bill. I have no more dollar bills to give out. But I can offer you Christ Jesus to live spiritually in you forever. Now is the time to confess your sins and believe in Jesus. Don't wait until tomorrow or the end of camp, begin today. I'd like you all to close your eyes as we close in prayer. And if there's anyone would wants Jesus Christ for yourself, would you raise your hand? Would you raise your hand high because you want God to come and dwell in you? Please pray this prayer with me either out loud or in your heart. God will hear you loud and clear either way.

Jesus, I believe that you are the God who created everything. I believe that you love me and are rescuing me right now from my sins. I confess that up until now I've been your enemy. I've made everything about me when everything is really about you. Thank you for forgiving me for my sinful disobedience. Thank you for making me holy and pure through the cross. I believe that you died and rose again on my behalf. I am excited to make the rest of my life about you instead of me. Please help me live every day for you. Amen.