

Palm Sunday: Supremacy of the Christ

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Date: 13 April 2025

Preacher: Andrew Rim

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. Happy Palm Sunday. Can you guys hear me all right? Awesome. Like Sean had mentioned, my name is Andrew Rim. I'm a pastoral intern here at Trinity Cambridge Church,! And it's a joy and an honor and a privilege to be able to preach God's word to you guys this morning.

And so if you guys could turn with me to Colossians chapter 1, verse 15 to 20. We're taking a quick break from our series through the Gospel of Matthew, where we are currently in the Sermon on the Mount. And we're now jumping to Colossians chapter 1, verse 15 to 20.

Before I pray for the reading and preaching of God's word, as we are worshiping, I just thought of Psalm 148.

And it reads, Let's pray.

Lord, we praise you. Lord, all of creation praises you.

[1 : 5 2] And this morning, we want to praise you through the reading of your word. We want to praise you by meditating on your word, delighting in it, and seeing that you are Lord over all, Lord.

Lord, remind us why we gather together on Sundays. Remind us why we gather as the body of Christ through your word today.

That we gather to glorify you, to magnify you, to make your name great. So be with us this morning.

I want your spirit to pierce our hearts. I want your spirit to speak to us and remind us of your majesty. We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Please stand with me as we read Colossians chapter 1, verse 15 to 20. Amen. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

[3 : 0 1] For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him.

and he is before all things and in him all things hold together and he is the head of the body the church he is the beginning the first born from the dead that in everything he might be preeminent for in him all the fullness of god was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross this is god's holy and authoritative word you may be seated this palm sunday morning uh we're taking uh like i mentioned before we're taking a vacation from the sermon on the mount in the gospel of matthew and we're instead looking at this passage here in colossians 1 15 to 20 this passage is one that pastor john piper calls perhaps the greatest exaltation to christ in all of the bible the late pastor rc sprawl calls this passage one of scripture's clearest and most stunning declarations about the divinity of christ these are high commendations given to this passage here and rightfully so because how we view christ must be both exalting in worship and clear in understanding and this passage does both of those things the apostle paul he writes this description of jesus in response to some heresies that false teachers in colossae are spouting to the colossian church and so in order to correct and address the church paul writes this letter to the church and right before our passage in verses 9 to 12 he says this we have not ceased to pray for you asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so as to walk in a manner worthy of the lord fully pleasing to him bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of god being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy giving thanks to the father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints and lights paul's encouraging the colossians to be filled with the knowledge of god with the knowledge of god to increase in the knowledge of god so that they might walk in a manner worthy of the lord bearing fruit in every good work being strengthened with all power for all endurance and patience with joy basically paul is saying and he's praying that the colossian church may know god rightly so that they may be able to worship god rightly in his book worship matters bob coughlin writes the better and the more accurately we know god through his word the more genuine our worship will be in fact the moment we veer from what is true about god we're engaging in idolatry regardless of what we think or feel there is no authentic worship of god without a right knowledge of god if we have an improper small view of who god is there are detrimental effects in our lives if we see god as a small god if we don't see god correctly we won't trust that jesus is lord over our lives we'll instead trust in man in our own selves and we'll follow our own desires and wants rather than submit to god will succumb to our fears and anxieties and turn to worldly pleasures like money

sex influence to number ourselves from these preoccupations as bob said an incomplete or small view of god will lead to the sin of idolatry and continuous unrepentant idolatry will lead to our ultimate eternal demise church in order for us to worship god and jesus christ rightly we have to have a right view of who he is that he may not be diminished or falsely represented by our worship even if we say that we know who jesus is we gather together like this we gather together as a church on sundays as the body of christ not just to learn new things about god but to remind ourselves over and over and over again who jesus christ is what he's done and to worship him as our supreme lord and savior and so please join me this morning in making much of christ in magnifying jesus and glorifying him and so this is what i'll be preaching as the main idea in colossians 1 15 to 20 magnify and rejoice in the supremacy of jesus christ who reigns over all creation and all redemption i'll be touching on two points this morning christ supremacy over all creation and christ supremacy over all redemption so we start in verse 15 verse 15 lays out the main thesis of our first point that christ reigns supreme over all creation we see first in the first part of verse 15 christ is the image of the invisible god christ is god while god the father is spirit and he's invisible jesus the person of the son of the holy trinity is god's ultimate self-revelation of himself by coming to this world in the form of man and to dwell amongst humankind in physical and visible form man was not able to see this invisible god moises inquired to see god's face to which god replies in exodus 33 20 you cannot see me for man shall not see me and live in isaiah 6 the prophet isaiah he saw on a vision the lord sitting on his throne and cried out woe is me for i'm lost for i am a man of unclean lips for my eyes have seen man the king the king the lord of hosts man is not able to directly see the full glory of god and live and can only see him when his glory is veiled like moises could only see god's back or isaiah could only perceive god's glory in his prophetic vision and this is why jesus is the ultimate revelation of god christ is the image of the invisible god he's not unimage one of many he's not made in the image of god just as man was he is the image of the invisible god the very embodiment of the word of god the logos who took on flesh and dwelt among us so that we can see god's glory as it said in john 1 14 when we see jesus we see god the father pastor arshese sprawl he recounts jesus teaching the same principle to his oblivious disciples in john 14 he says jesus deals with his disciples and they say to him at the last days jesus show us the father and it's a fifth of us that's what we want to see we've seen all kinds of fantastic things

watched you walk on the water feed 5 000 people raise people from the dead we saw the transfiguration which was incredible now do the biggie for us yeah show us the father and what does he say whoever has seen me has seen the father jesus is saying as clearly as he could say in so many categories i am god jesus doesn't need to do the biggie he is the biggie jesus is the image of the invisible god the divine incarnation that reveals god's glory directly to us john chapter 1 verse 18 says no one has ever seen god the only god who is at the father's side he has made him known god is revealed to us in jesus christ we don't have to seek out mystical or spiritual experiences apart from christ nor do we have to isolate ourselves in the desert and force ourselves into an ascetic self-flagellant lifestyle in order to see god like so many people nowadays think must be done we get to know god in jesus jesus is the way jesus is the truth jesus is the life and no one comes to the father except through jesus because he is the image of the invisible god in the second part of verse 15 we read that jesus is also the firstborn of all creation at a glance this is a bit of a confusing statement wasn't adam technically the firstborn of creation how can jesus be called the firstborn if he comes into the world long after the genesis creation narrative in one sense the word firstborn firstborn can be viewed from a temporal perspective based on time christ is the firstborn of all creation because he's the eternally begotten son of god eternally begotten doesn't mean that jesus was a product of god's creative creative acts he's not a product a product of god's creative works but he's existed with god the father in eternity past as the person of the son of the son in the holy trinity as it said in john 1 jesus was the word in the beginning who was with god and was god and so while jesus was not born in eternity past he was chronologically pre-existing before adam but while this explanation of jesus as the pre-existing firstborn is true it seems more likely that that word firstborn is being used instead as a designation of rank and tier that christ is superior as the creator of all things contextually it makes more sense to see christ as the firstborn as the supreme rather than the pre-existent since this entire passage is focusing on christ's supremacy not his pre-existence we see that word firstborn being used in this way of ranking in psalm 89 verse 27 and 29 where god proclaims of david of king david and i will make him the firstborn the highest of the kings of the earth i will establish his offspring forever in his throne as the days of the heavens though david was the youngest of his brothers he is referred to as the firstborn because of his role and position given to him by god to be king and ruler over all of israel david was

named the firstborn because he was ruler of all of israel this is also consistent with adam's given role and charged in genesis 1:28 when god commanded him to subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth adam was given kingship as the firstborn of mankind to rule over creation in the garden of eden and so in the same way paul is using the language to refer to christ as the firstborn the firstborn the principal king and ruler over all creation hebrews chapter 1 verse 6 declares of jesus's majesty and supremacy that when god brings the firstborn jesus into the world he says let all god's angels worship him just as we proclaimed in our call to worship let all god's angels worship him jesus is to be worshiped and revered even by the heavenly host of angels because he is the firstborn the supreme over all creation verses 16 and 17 explain the significance of christ being the image of god and the firstborn of all creation for by all things by him all things were created and all things were created through him paul is saying that jesus is the agent of all creation and jesus is the means through which all things are created whether they're animate or inanimate whether they're visible or invisible on earth or in heaven paul is describing the whole range of the created order and how they all originate from jesus as their maker jesus is the creator of all things it's also written in verse 16 that christ is the creator of all things whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities paul uses these terms thrones dominions rulers authorities throughout his letters to refer not just to earthly kings and kingdoms but also spiritual entities and powers including angels who are subject to jesus's work of creation and paul is most likely including this categorization of creation to address the heresy being taught by the false teachers in the colossian church because they were teaching that christians needed to be worshipping angels they need to be worshipping angels along with adhering to other ascetic rituals and philosophies in order to be qualified as faithful christians they were making the worship of angels a requirement to be counted as faithful if anything the this angelic worship would be an act of idolatry because the angels themselves serve and worship god alone to worship them would detract from the worship of their creator jesus who is of a higher order and rank to them as an example of this we see that an angel of the lord stopped the apostle john from worshipping him in revelation chapter 19 verse 10 the angel exclaims you must not do that i am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of jesus and so worship god and so paul is making the points here that christ is the creator and master of these angelic beings and so it will be an abominable sin to dare worship anything of a lower echelon that has been created to serve christ church the false teachings of angel worship is not as far-fetched as we may think it is in our context today at its core this heresy was one of idolatry worshipping something that was not god

[19 : 28] and we can all agree that idolatry still runs rampant today all around us right and we're all subject to be tempted to idolize something in our lives how many of us need to check ourselves to make sure that we're not prioritizing our families over god how many of us need to check ourselves to make sure we're not prioritizing our careers over god our relationships our money our resources over god idolatry can even appear in matters related to our faith we can idolize miracles and gifts rather than worshiping god the miracle maker and the gift giver we can idolize grace and cheapen it to cover our sinful behavior and our overindulgent lifestyle neglecting the call to live a life that is pleasing to the lord we can idolize righteousness and god's law and become legalistic and pharisaical and working out our salvation forgetting that we have been saved by grace all of these things that we have been saved by christ and serve to bring glory to the creator but we need to be vigilant that these things like the angels do not take priority over god that they do not take away from the full worship that christ deserves and so christ is the creator of all heavenly and spiritual thrones dominions rulers and authorities but these thrones dominions rulers and authorities aren't just good spirits aren't just good angels the same greek word for dominion and authority is used in colossians 1 13 and 2 15 in reference to christ delivering us from the domain of evil and darkness delivering us from the authority of darkness and evil church there are evil angels there are evil spirits originally created by christ only to be corrupted by the fall and yet even so these powers these spirits these angels that were twisted into forces of evil were created by jesus the fact that jesus is the creator of all things including things that are evil as a result of the fall may be really unsettling to some of us but imagine the opposite scenario imagine that jesus isn't the creator of the things that have become evil what if he doesn't have control over these things for example what if a loved one in our lives is terribly sick would it be better to know that god is there and even amidst the sickness he's in control or do we remain hopeless thinking that god is not there at all and that he cannot control fallen and broken things the latter option would be terrifying that may be an even more unsettling reality for us that there are things that the god we worship cannot command cannot subdue cannot defeat but church we can find great comfort through this reminder in verse 17 that in christ all things hold together all things hold together in christ

jesus is not only the chief designer of all creation he's the sovereign preserver and maintainer of it he's not like dr frankenstein unable to influence his own creation and creature once it comes to life nothing is out of jesus's control even when we feel like our world is tearing apart even when we feel like everything around us is falling apart because jesus is sovereign over everything that he has created and all of creation is under his command there's the same jesus in the gospels who walks on water who calmed storms who commanded demons to be cast out and who raised people from the dead in all of these things jesus was in control brothers and sisters do we ever consider that it's jesus who first spun the earth around the sun and he continues to do so to create the perfect amount of gravitational pull that we don't float away into outer space nor be flattened to a pancake by that force of gravity or do we ever consider that jesus designed our bodies so intricately that our blood and our organs can fend for themselves and build immunity against harmful bacteria church do we ever look at earthquakes forest fires tsunamis and other natural disasters rampaging through our world and remember that jesus brings life even out of these natural disasters or do we ever witness tyrannical leaders persecuting nations civil unrest war famine greed tearing through this world all throughout this world russia ukraine israel palestine syria sudan myanmar even in the united states and do we still remind ourselves that christ is sovereign and in control no matter what it is all things all things are created by christ and all things are ultimately dependent all things all things were created for christ for christ we see at the end of verse 16 all things were created for him the goal of creation is christ creation exists and continues to exist for christ to display his creative power his lordship over all creation to display his glory all creation should point to glorifying christ and christ alone the world i'm always amazed when people get these tubs of legos just lego blocks garbage bags full of them and without any instruction manual without any directions they're able to manage to build a 10 foot tall empire state building or a motorized lego roller coaster or an exact replica of hogwarts castle i like look at these lego marvin these lego sets and marvel for a while and then finally all i could do is arrive at the conclusion whoever made this has to be some sort of genius they're built different the legos are built different and in a way these lego creations these lego sets they ended up bringing recognition

acclaim and maybe even glory to the lego creators themselves but how many of us look at all creation how many of us look around us even in this dimly lit falling apart auditorium how many of us look at all creation all created things and think about jesus as the genius and all powerful creator i'm gonna admit i'm gonna confess i don't i'm too busy focusing on what i need to do what i have to accomplish that i lose sight of jesus's majesty through his creation but we should see everything around us all creation and stand in awe being reminded of god's glory and being reminded of his majesty you know who's good at that kathy kathy is great at doing that she goes out on a run and when she returns i ask her how's the run i'm expecting her to tell me oh i ran at a nine and a half minute pace my average heart rate was 145 bpm average stride length two and a half feet per step and i was at optimal vo2 levels i don't even know what vo2 is and i've been running for like three years four years instead how she usually responds is this way oh it was great the flowers were so beautiful and blooming the clouds were really pretty today and i saw a mom deer and her baby in the woods and i stopped and stared at them for a while wow god's creation is so beautiful or some variant of that kathy approved of this message thank you kathy my point is all creation whether it's the flowers or the deer whether it's the beating of our own heart our heart rate or our perceived oxygen intake as we run all things should point to glorifying christ because he created them all church all things invisible or visible whether we can perceive it or not all things are created by christ and they're created to point to his glory his majesty his beauty supremacy church we too we too as humans are created by and sustained by christ we're uniquely different from the rest of christian in that we were created in the image of god the imago dei and he saw that this was very good how incredible is that that every single one of us were made by him made through him and made for him that's why everything that we do everything that we say everything that we think is to be for christ to point to his glory church we're so selfish we're so prone to put ourselves to put humanity at the center of the universe and to put all else including god around us to serve our needs our wants but scripture shows us that it's not us we're not that guy it's not us but it's god who sits enthroned at the center of all things at the center of the universe he's the one who's created us he's the one who sustains us and he's the sovereign ruler of all things from the tiniest unit of a cork

to the largest cluster of galaxies christ our supreme god and creator deserves our service our glory and our worship he deserves it all and this leads to my second and final points that christ supremacy is over all redemption if christ were to be glorified just because of his creative works just because of his sustaining works just because he is the lord creator that would still be sufficient and reasonable and warranted for christ but our colossians passage shows us that christ is to be glorified and that he's supposed to be seen as the supreme for another reason and that's because he reigns supreme over all redemption over the new creation in verse 18 we see that christ is the head of the body the church just as christ has authority and kingship over all creation christ has authority and kingship over the church the redeemed body of believers over us trinity cambridge church as we too are part of the universal body of christ christ the second half of verse 8 verse 18 explains why christ is called the head of the church it's because he is the beginning the firstborn from the dead he is the beginning the firstborn of resurrection life we arrive at this word firstborn again and this time this word firstborn is used in temporal designation christ being the firstborn from the dead means that he's the first to ever be resurrected from the dead for good he's been resurrected from the dead for good once and for all in the gospels while lazarus jirus's daughter and the widow's son were all raised from the dead by jesus at the end of their lives they returned to the dead once they reached the end of their lives they returned to the grave but jesus jesus died and resurrected and instead of returning to the grave he ascended into eternal life with the father in heaven he was the first to do that he was the og and not only that jesus's resurrection defeated the curse of sin and death the wages of sin are death without christ anyone who sinned including us was guaranteed an eternal fate of damnation but by dying on the cross as the propitiation and the atonement for human humanity's transgressions jesus took on the burden of our sin and died the death that we deserved only to rise again and stand victorious over the grave church he was the first to do that he was the first to resurrect from the grave and be raised into eternal life so that he could bring us the redeemed out of the grave and into eternal life as well it's through christ's death and resurrection that those who believe in him may have access to his resurrection power to this eternal life they are a new creation meaning that they have been redeemed by the blood of christ and are being made righteous and perfect by the sanctification of the holy spirit and this is why jesus is called the beginning in verse 18

he's the beginning the firstborn from the dead just as all things were created for christ to glorify him jesus's death and resurrection signals the beginning of new creation that all things renewed and reconciled might also be for christ to point to his glory his preeminence and so jesus's resurrection shows that he reigns supreme over all things in the realm of the living and of the dead and finally in verses 19 and 20 we're told that jesus is preeminent that he is glorified and worthy to be called supreme so he reigns because the fullness of god was pleased to dwell in jesus christ the image of the invisible god of man, to die on the cross and to resurrect from the dead in order for grace, peace, and forgiveness to be extended toward God's people.

[37 : 02] Jesus could have been glorified by coming into this world as God, but not as a man. He could have come and enacted righteous judgment on all the earth.

He could have wiped out anything that had even an ounce of imperfection or sin, and he could have cleared everything out into a clean slate, a clean canvas, and started over again.

But God saw this world, this imperfect, broken, sinful world, and he saw it fitting to come into the world as fully God and fully man through his son, Jesus.

This Jesus experienced the same hunger, the same aching, the same grief, the full range of human emotions and mortal limitations that we did, and yet he was without sin.

And the sinless son of God, he saw it fitting to die a humiliating death on the cross. He died a sinner's death to atone for our sins, our guilt, and shame so that we can be in right standing before God the Father and be reconciled to him.

[38 : 18] This is how God, this is how Jesus was glorified. This is how God chose to reveal the glory, the supremacy of Christ to us.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, his blood poured out on the cross. Christ bestowed onto us, God's grace and mercy, and he redeemed us from the bondage of sin and death, that we can be in eternal fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the new heavens and the new earth forever and ever.

This does not make sense. The Puritan revivalist and preacher Jonathan Edwards says this of the mystery and wonder of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

how astonishing is it that a person who is blessed forever and is infinitely and essentially happy should endure the greatest sufferings that were ever endured on earth that a person who is the supreme lord and judge of the world should be arraigned and should stand at the judgment seat of mortal worms and then be condemned that a person who is the living god and the fountain of life should be put to death that a person who created the world and gives life to all his creatures should be put to death by his own creatures that a person of infinite majesty and glory and so the object of the love praisiness and adorations of angels should be mocked and spit upon by the vilest of men that a person infinitely good and who is love itself should suffer the greatest cruelty that person who is infinitely beloved of the father should be put to inexpressible anguish under his own father's wrath that he who is the king of heaven who has heaven for his throne and earth for his footstool should be buried in the prison of the grave how wonderful is this and yet this is the way that god's wisdom has fixed upon as the way of sinner's salvation as neither unsuitable nor dishonorable to christ it was pleasing to god to send his one and only son to die on the cross for us it was pleasing for god to glorify christ through that to make him supreme lord over all from him through him and to him are all things church when jesus entered jerusalem on what we commemorate as palm sunday the people of jerusalem cried out hosanna save us lord they welcomed and worshiped jesus expecting him to be a warrior king a human conqueror who would overthrow the roman empire and restore israel to its former glory brothers and sisters how much greater than should our worship be knowing that jesus is far greater and far more than just a human ruler and conqueror of israel but that he's the savior that he's the redeemer that he's the reconciler of all things jerusalem cried out hosanna hosanna we need a savior this morning and forevermore let us shout with joy and acclamation hallelujah hallelujah we have a savior let's pray jesus how wonderful how beautiful how marvelous you are

the name above all names the one who is exalted high the one who created all things the one who sustains all things the one who holds all things in his hands lord our words can't fully express how majestic how supreme you are and yet you call us to worship you allow us to worship we thank you so much for this opportunity we thank you so much that you died on the cross for our sins that we can come into your presence to worship you to make much of you to glorify you and we ask that you remind us lord remind us of your lordship remind us of your sovereignty remind us that you are controlling in control of all things and remind us that you're preserving us through the power of your holy spirit and sanctifying us that one day we will be able to see you face to face and we'll be able to worship you in fellowship with the father the son and the holy spirit forevermore we thank you and we love you we pray all this in jesus name amen you