



## Part 3

June 13, 2010

Pastor Chris Lawson

# Jesus, FIRST Among Creation

We are off to a wonderful start in our study of Colossians. This week we will tackle Colossians 1:15-20, Paul's great hymn about Jesus. This text is beautiful poetry that illustrates Paul's understanding of the comprehensive nature of God's beloved Son, and of Jesus' relationship to the world. I believe it will be transformational to be reminded just how radical the life, death and resurrection of Jesus continues to be.

It is going to be a great week!

Pastor Chris

## COLOSSIANS CHAPTER ONE

**C**<sup>15</sup> *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* <sup>16</sup> *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.* <sup>17</sup> *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* <sup>18</sup> *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.* <sup>19</sup> *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,* <sup>20</sup> *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

(English Standard Version)

Let us pray.

*God, I thank you that today we examine some of the more profound verses in all of Scripture, that not only call Jesus 'Savior', but call Him preeminent over all things.*

*Lord, I ask that you would tie my tongue to truth. It is in Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.*

**H**ymns are our way to praise God, and they play an important role in a worshipping community. In fact, throughout Christian history hymns have been one of the primary methods for communicating our affection and appreciation toward God. And to this day, among the numerous American writers of Christian hymns, one person stands as a shining example of both productivity and depth. In fact, the vast majority of American hymnals contain her work. Some of her best known songs include *Blessed Assurance*, *Jesus Is Tenderly Calling*, *Praise Him, Praise Him*, and *To God Be the Glory*.

Today's  
Scriptures

Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 50:10; Daniel 3; Luke 24:27; John 1:16; Acts 9:1-19; 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Ephesians 6:11-12; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 3:22; 2 Peter 3:18; Revelation 5; 8:1; 13:2; 17:3, 7

*The Bible is the story of Jesus.  
The Old Testament prepares us for Jesus;  
The Gospels present Jesus; the Book of Acts is the proclamation of Jesus;  
The Epistles show us how it looks to live like Jesus in the world; and  
Revelation is the predomination of the slain Lamb of God  
who now reigns as our Great High Priest.*

**F**anny Crosby was born in 1820 to New York natives. When she was six weeks old she lost her sight to a simple infection because of poor medical care. Her father died when she was a year old, and she was raised by her mother and grandmother. She studied at the New York Institute for the Blind for sixteen years, served as a lobbyist for blind education in Washington, DC, taught at her alma mater, married only once to another faculty member, and lost her only child during her first year of life. Simply put, Fanny Crosby's life was defined by loss and struggle. Yet, Crosby, when reflecting on her own earthly condition, wrote these words:

*Oh what a happy soul am I,  
Although I cannot see;  
I am resolved that in this world  
Contented I will be.  
How many blessings I enjoy  
That other people don't;  
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,  
I cannot, and I won't.*

How is it possible that someone who suffered such loss could write so many hopeful words? How can such promise be derived from such sorrow?

Fanny Crosby wrote over eight thousand hymns, and because some publishers were hesitant to publish so many by one songwriter in their hymnals, she used nearly two hundred different pen names.

How could someone who in the flesh would have every reason to be bitter, instead be among the most

prolific writers of God-honoring music in Christian history?

Among her most lasting words she wrote this great stanza:

*To God be the glory, great things He has done;  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life gate that all may go in.*

Fanny could write these words in spite of her circumstances because she understood the profound nature of God's own Son, who yielded His life as an atonement for her sin.

Today, as we continue our study of Colossians, we look at another great hymn, not one by Fanny Crosby, but one by the Apostle Paul.

In the last two weeks together we have learned the author of Colossians, Paul; met his traveling companion, Timothy; located the city of the letter, Colossae; read Paul's benevolent greeting and thanksgiving for the faith of the young church; read a defense of the purity of the Gospel against a rising heresy in Colossae; and been reminded that we have changed kingdoms because our very nature has changed through faith in Jesus.

## ALL ABOUT JESUS

Our few verses for today are some of the most important in all of Colossians. In fact, these verses lay out the battleground for the very heart of Christianity. It is often said that Scripture, the

entirety of the Bible, is all about Jesus, which is more accurate than we have most likely understood.

For instance, the Old Testament prepares us for Jesus; the Gospels present Jesus; the Book of Acts is the proclamation of Jesus; the letters, or Epistles, show us the personification of Jesus, or how it looks to live like Jesus in the world; and Revelation is the predomination of the slain Lamb of God who now reigns as our Great High Priest. The Bible is the story of Jesus.

For those of us who preach and teach from these Scriptures, it's wonderful to know that wherever we open God's Word we can preach Jesus from that place. I draw your attention once again to Luke the physician's account of Jesus' encounter, following the resurrection, with two men on the road to Emmaus. While meeting with these men it says,

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*<sup>1</sup>

The Old Testament is divided into three parts: the Books of Moses (the first five books), the Prophets (the prophetic books), and the holy writings, (the remaining Scriptures). This passage tells us that Jesus taught the men everything that concerned Him from the beginning Scriptures (Moses) to the close of the Old Testament (the Prophets). He opened their eyes that they might see Him.

This was true for Paul too. While he was on the way to murder Christians, Paul's eyes were opened so that he might see Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

And it was the same with Lydia. God gave her a heart that she might know His love.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible, in fact, all of God's work in the world, is about bringing Himself glory by revealing His Son to us.

## A GLIMPSE AT THE HERESY

Among all the statements that reveal Jesus in all of Scripture, our text for today, beginning in verse fifteen, is among the most powerful.

<sup>15</sup> *He (the Son, from verse 13) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* <sup>16</sup> *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,*

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 24:27

<sup>2</sup> Acts 9:1-19

<sup>3</sup> Acts 16:13-15

*The Bible,  
in fact, all of God's work in the world,  
is about bringing Himself glory  
by revealing His Son to us.*

*visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.* <sup>17</sup> *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* <sup>18</sup> *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

As we dive into these verses together today it might be helpful to begin by first placing them into their historical setting. We learned earlier that when Epaphras visited Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome, he made Paul aware that there was a particularly nasty heresy that was being taught in Colossae.<sup>4</sup>

It is abundantly clear that among the many speculations about this heresy, one of them related to the deity of Jesus. This heresy taught that Jesus was not God, and not sufficient for salvation. Thus, in addition to Jesus there must be something added to secure salvation. This *something added* may have been the worship of spirits, or angels, special visions or gifts, supernatural knowledge – all of which they contended were essential for salvation and not attainable in Jesus.

These heretics taught that Jesus was from a long line of emanating (descending) spirits that came from God. They believed God emanated both good spirits and bad spirits; that in the beginning He sent out more of the good ones than the bad, but at the time of the heresy He was sending more of the bad

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<sup>4</sup> Colossians 1:6-8

*Jesus is God  
and He has dominion  
over all things.*

than the good. Jesus was a good spirit, but only one of many emanating, or descending, spirits from God, and thus He was not adequate to be Savior; knowledge beyond Jesus was the only way to receive salvation.

Now I want to be careful that we don't become lost in the weeds here, but this heresy was based on *philosophical dualism*, which was a remnant of the heresy of the Hellenistic culture which was brought to Colossae during the expansion of the Greek Empire by Alexander the Great. Philosophical dualism taught that matter was evil and spirit was good; since God is Spirit, He is good; but since creation is matter, it is evil, AND a good God could never make an evil creation. Thus Jesus, who is matter, could not be God; He was created by God like an angel, and He was one of the enormous numbers of emanations God sent forth to make His goodness known.

## AN ANCIENT HERESY

This type of thinking was not only present in the first-century. During the fourth century, Arius of Alexandria in Egypt began a similar teaching, that Jesus was good, but a created being and not God, so He was not sufficient for salvation.

In 325 CE the Council of Nicaea convened to consider many matters, and in particular whether Jesus was the literal son of God or a figurative son, like the other *sons of God* in the Bible. The Council of Nicaea obviously rejected this teaching and wrote the Nicene Creed, a statement of orthodoxy about the nature of Jesus, which, in part, reads:

*We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God,*

*begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.*

So 325 years after Jesus the church was still dealing with this issue.

## A MODERN ADOPTION

These challenges to the deity and nature of Jesus continue even today. In 1879 Charles Russell began publishing *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, which later became *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. And in 1881, he co-founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society, which had its home base in New York City and became the founding governing body of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

It would be fair to assume that most of us have received a Saturday morning visit from this group, which believes that Jesus was created by God, but is not God in the flesh. They believe Jesus originally existed in a pre-human state as the Archangel Michael, and that Michael later took human form and was like any other human, except that he was sinless at birth and remained so through life. And his name became Jesus.

These beliefs about Jesus are exactly what Paul had in mind as he wrote the verses we are examining today. Paul was contending that Jesus is not an emanation of God, but is God in the flesh and sufficient for salvation. In fact, the first three chapters of Colossians are Paul's affirmation of this belief and attempt to refute the heresy.

All of this background is to bring us to this statement: Jesus is God and He has dominion over all things.

Today's text reveals an all-sufficient Jesus by showing his relationship to God, the universe, the unseen world, the church, and every other created thing. Let's see how these verses reveal this truth.

### Jesus Is Sufficient In Relation To GOD

<sup>15</sup> *He is the image of the invisible God*

We learn over and over again in Scripture that God is invisible. For instance, 1 Timothy 1:17 tells us that God is invisible, and throughout the Old Testament God is invisible. God *is* invisible, but God became visible by revealing himself through His Son Jesus. Jesus is the *visible image* of the

*invisible God*. This should sound familiar, for we all know that in Genesis one we read that *God made man in His own image and likeness*,<sup>5</sup> but it seems pretty clear that this is different than the way God made Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:7 says *man is the image and glory of God*. Man was created in the image of God, but is not the *perfect* image of God because our image is also tainted by sin. Yet, because we are made in the image of God, we are able to think, feel and decide. Meaning, the results of sin could be much worse, except that we are created in the image of God and reflect His glory, even if tainted.

We are representative images of God to advance His Kingdom. Adam was created, and thus we were created, to *give* God glory; Jesus was created to *receive* glory.

In Daniel three, King Nebuchadnezzar set an image of his god outside of his temple so that people would see a representation of that god. It was an image *like* his god. But when we see Jesus, we see our God. And Paul seems to be standing up this kind of dichotomy so that we understand that we are created in the image of God, but we are not *the* image of God.

And so Jesus is God revealed in the world. If you want to know what God's like, look at Jesus.

Consider this:

*If God were a man,*  
we would expect Him to be sinless;  
and Jesus was.

*If God were a man,*  
we would expect Him  
to speak the greatest words ever spoken;  
and Jesus did.

*If God were a man,*  
we would expect Him  
to have unbelievable influence on humanity;  
and Jesus did.

*If God were a man,*  
we would expect  
that He would do miracles with ease;  
and Jesus did.

*If God were a man,*  
we would expect Him to love perfectly;  
and Jesus did,  
because Jesus was God,  
and God can only be known by knowing Jesus.

And so Jesus is God revealed to the world.

*Jesus was God,  
and God can only be known  
by knowing Jesus.  
And so Jesus is God  
revealed to the world.*

## Jesus Is Sufficient In Relation To THE UNIVERSE

### The Firstborn

Continuing on in verse fifteen we read, [He is] *the firstborn of all creation*. This verse has potential to cause a lot of problems if you do not understand what it is saying. *Firstborn* here is a reference to *position*, not time. The Greek word πρωτότοκος (prototokos, pro-tot-ok'-os), translated here as *firstborn*, refers to rank and rightful authority, not to time or chronology.

The people of Colossae had no doubt what Paul was talking about here. He was referring to Jesus as the honored One, privileged One, God's heir, the *firstborn*, following the Old Testament motif that the firstborn received a fuller portion of the inheritance.

### The Heir To All The Earth

God's inheritance belongs to Jesus. This week I would like you to read Revelation chapter five. In it we see God the Father on the throne with a scroll in His hand. It is the title or deed to the Earth, and is sealed with seven seals, as was a customary requirement in Roman law for sealing a will. This related to Rome being called at that time the *City On Seven Hills*.

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:26-27

# JESUS

*is literally holding together the universe!*

Not to get off on a rant here, but this is why I do not expect for a beast to come out of the ocean with seven heads when this all comes to an end.<sup>6</sup> It seems clear that Paul is using a metaphorical device to say that the City On Seven Hills, or the beast with seven heads, is going to lose and Jesus is going to win. And here we see this same language in Revelation five, that the seven seals of times protect the title deed to the earth.

Verse two reads, *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?'*

Meaning, who will inherit the earth? Who is the rightful heir? Who has the right to claim ownership with the deed, to take it back; to inherit it? And no one in heaven or on earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the scroll or even to look at it. And John cried,

<sup>4</sup> *and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.*

Where is the *prototokos*? Where is the firstborn? See this:

<sup>5</sup> *And one of the elders said to me, 'Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'*

## King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Here is Jesus taking the title deed to the earth as the firstborn to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus IS the firstborn and has dominion over all of creation. Jesus was not created; Jesus is before creation.

## The Sustainer of Creation

One of the most fascinating things I have ever read, is that Jesus is the sustainer of creation – He is literally holding creation together.

Physicist Lambert Dolphin says this:

*The nucleus of every atom is held together by what physicists call 'weak' and 'strong' forces. (Physicists today are familiar with four basic forces in the natural world: gravity, electrical forces, a 'strong,' and a 'weak' nuclear force ...)*

*The nucleus of the atom contains positively-charged and neutral particles... Mutual electrostatic repulsion between the like-positive protons would drive the nucleus apart if it were not for the 'strong force' which binds the nucleus together.<sup>7</sup>*

For example, two positively-charged magnets will not come together; they repel each other. Likewise, Dolphin is saying that the multitude of positively-charged particles in the nucleus of an atom are so strong that in their natural inclination to reject each other, if it were not for *something*, the particles would rip the atom apart.

And because physicists do not understand what in the world could keep these positively-charged particles from ripping apart the atom as they reject each other, they call it the *strong force*.

We call it *Jesus!*

And so I am often reminded that every bit of creation shouts the name of JESUS! Right?!

Another physicist, Karl K. Darrow, contends that, *These nuclei have no right to be alive at all. In fact, they never should have been created, and if they were created, they should have been blown up instantly.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Lambert Dolphin, *What Holds The Universe Together?* 17 June 2010 <<http://ldolphin.org/cohere.shtml>>.

<sup>8</sup> D. Lee Chestnut, *The Atom Speaks* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 66, 67.

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<sup>6</sup> Revelation 13:2, 17:3, 7

Everything about creation says it should not exist, but scientists say *something*, a **STRONG FORCE**, is holding together the entire universe.

## Jesus

is literally holding together the universe!

### Jesus Is Sufficient In Relation To THE UNSEEN WORLD

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Here we find many of the classes of angels – thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities. I certainly do not claim to be an expert in the study of angels, and to be sure, we know very little about the unseen world because it is precisely that, *unseen*, but I do know that this is serious business. Consider the words of Paul in Ephesians six,

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood – things that we do not see – *but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

There is a battle raging in the heavens and on the earth – a battle which is unseen by our human eyes. Here we see the different ranks, but we do not know the organizational or hierarchal structure. Whatever they are, Jesus created all of them. He isn't *one* of the emanations, He *made* all the emanations, and He has power over every one of them, both those which had fallen and those which had not.

In 1 Peter 3:22 we read that Jesus <sup>22</sup> ... *has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.* So Jesus is not an angel; He is *over* the angels.

Paul was essentially telling the Colossians they did not need to worship an angel so that they might know Christ, because the angels are beneath Him, and He has the power and the authority to command every one of them.

*The Church is an organism.*

*It is unified yet diverse,*

*shifting yet moving,*

*yet ALWAYS led by the Head.*

### Jesus Is Sufficient In Relation To THE CHURCH

We have seen Jesus in relation to God, in relation to the world, and in relation to the unseen world – all created beings. Next, we see that Jesus is head over the church. Verse eighteen reads,

*And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

There is a list in Scripture of metaphors used for the church. We are called a *family*, a *kingdom*, a *vineyard*, a *flock*, a *building*, and a *bride*. But I believe all of those pale in comparison to, the *body*.

I was reading about the body this week. The pituitary gland is at the back of your neck. It controls all of the hormones that enable your body to grow. So if that pituitary gland ever stops working, then you cease to grow.

I do not think it is by accident that God put in us the control for our growth in our head and then used the same metaphor for his own Church. The Church is an organism. It is unified yet diverse, shifting yet moving, yet ALWAYS led by the Head.

I think sometimes we forget how important the Church is to Jesus. I remind you again that when Paul was on his way to murder Christians and

but He also is the Head, the instigator, the facilitator of the Church.

## Jesus Is Sufficient In Relation To EVERY CREATED THING

<sup>19</sup> *For in him all the fullness of God  
was pleased to dwell*

*The powers of deity,  
the attributes of sovereignty,  
were not distributed  
among a multitude of beings.  
They are possessed by Jesus.  
So in Him all fullness dwells.  
And when you become a Christian,  
all that He is becomes yours.*

And finally, just in case anything - some power or some created thing - had been omitted in his discourse on the nature, power and authority of Jesus, Paul has stated that every single thing, all of it, dwells in Him. The powers of deity, the attributes of sovereignty, were not distributed among a multitude of beings. They are possessed by Jesus. So in Him all fullness dwells.

And what is incredible is that we are told in John 1:16 that when you become a Christian, ... *from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace*, meaning when you become a Christian, all that He is becomes yours.

And our only response to that great gift can only be this: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity! Amen.*<sup>11</sup>

## A CURSE RECONCILED

We will end our time today where we will pick up next week, in verse twenty:

<sup>20</sup> *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

By all other efforts you were the enemy of God, but by this one final effort you have been reconciled to God. This section of Scripture presents a particularly unique view of Jesus. He is not only God who became flesh, who has dominion over this earth, but He is God who became flesh and who has dominion over the cosmos; EVERYTHING was created by Him.

persecute the Church, Jesus stopped him in his tracks and asked, *Why are you persecuting me?*<sup>9</sup>

Lest anybody be confused that Jesus and the Church are synonymous, He died for people, but He died that His Gospel might go forth through His Church. And so here we see that if we are disconnected from the Head, we no longer grow. If we ever are disconnected from this force, from the Head, from the anointing that drips down from the Head into the feet, we no longer grow. This is why Hebrews tells us not to give up meeting together.<sup>10</sup> Get together, love each other, hold each other accountable, be in a tough family, or vineyard – or whatever metaphor you want to use – but know that it begins with the Head, because all growth starts there.

So Paul wanted the Colossians to clearly understand that Jesus is the image of God, and that He is not only over all the world, seen and unseen,

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<sup>9</sup> Acts 9:4

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 10:25

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Peter 3:18

*When you were eternally separated  
from the God who spoke the universe into existence,  
He sent His Son, the Firstborn,  
who died in your place for your sin.  
And through that priceless gift, He opened a life gate  
that you might come in.*

## HOW BIG IS OUR GOD?

Our last science lesson for today. Stop to think about the size of the sun. The sun is BIG; it is REAL BIG! If you were to cut a hole in the sun and to start dropping planet Earths into it, you could put 1.2 million earths into it and still have room for 4.3 million moons to fill up the margins! THAT IS REALLY BIG! The nearest star to us that we see is 200 billion miles away. The North Star is 400 billion miles away!

One particular star, one of the furthest we know of, is 880 quadrillion miles away! I don't even know what that number looks like. And scientists say that the diameter of that star is larger than the orbit of the earth. WOW!

That's a lot of material, and Jesus Christ made it all.

This is why when people say,  
*I don't believe that miracle about Jesus turning water into wine.*

I say, *Really? That was the easiest thing He did on that day.*

*I don't believe that Jesus took a crippled man's hand and gave him a new life.*

I say, *Really? There is a star that we know of that is eight hundred and eighty quadrillion miles away. Its diameter is bigger than the orbit of the earth. You have a problem with a hand receiving new life, and water being turned into wine?*

This is why I don't have a problem believing that you can have cancer today, and not have it tomorrow; or that you might be worried about your

finances, but the God who owns all the cattle on a thousand hills is not.<sup>12</sup>

This is why you might be worried about whether or not your marriage can be reconciled, but Jesus, who brought people back from the dead, knows He can bring new life to your marriage.

And so when you start thinking about how big your problem is, think about how big your God is. He is creating stars that are so far away that even at the speed of light the echo of their existence has not yet gotten to our Earth.

We just do not have any idea how big our God is.

When we read Paul's hymn about the God who spoke the universe into existence, we are reminded that nothing we are carrying by ourselves is too big for our God. And this is why Fanny Crosby could sing,

*To God be the glory, great things He has done;  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life gate that all may go in.*

When you were eternally separated from the God who spoke the universe into existence, He sent His Son, the Firstborn, who died in your place for your sin. And through that priceless gift, He opened a life gate that you might come in.

When Fanny realized what God had done, her next words were,

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear His voice.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!*

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<sup>12</sup> Psalm 50:10

*God, we thank you for the good news of your Gospel. When all is said and done, when the burdens of our own existence become too heavy, let us be reminded that you with a single breath spoke into existence the star we have not yet seen.*

*And, Lord, thank you that you loved us so much that you sent your Firstborn, the One who holds the title deed to the earth, to die in our place for our sin. When I realize that amazing truth, all I can do is raise my hands and sing, Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the people rejoice. In Jesus' name, AMEN.*

**I**f you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, let today be the day that you in faith ask Him to be King of your life and Lord of your existence.

Maybe it is that today the burdens of life are just too heavy and you need somebody to remind you that when they nailed to a cross the God who put the entire cosmos into existence, He knew your name and the number of hairs on your head.<sup>13</sup>

Isn't it good news that God, who created the Universe, knows your name? I am happy when a person at Sam's Club knows my name! I am happy when someone here remembers I am on staff and I don't have to wear a nametag. But the God who spoke the universe into existence, knows my name.

*When they nailed to a cross  
the God who put the entire cosmos  
into existence,  
He knew your name  
and the number of hairs  
on your head.*

So today as you leave here, leave knowing this,  
that your God loves you, and your church loves you.

Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!

Let me send you out with a blessing,

May God the Father,  
Who spoke all of creation into existence,  
And Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God,  
Who died in your place for your sins,  
And the Holy Spirit,  
Who now lives in you so He might work through you,  
Be with you now and always.

And God's people said,  
AMEN!

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. In Colossians 1:15-20 Paul paints a vivid and particular portrait of Jesus. What did you learn from these verses about Jesus?
2. In verses 15-17, what argument does Paul make for the deity of Jesus?
3. Why is it important that we understand Jesus' nature and being fully human and fully divine? What was at stake in Colossae? What is at stake today?
4. What was Jesus' role in creation?
5. Please read Jesus' words in Revelation 1:8. How does this verse reflect the truths we found in Colossians 1:15-20?
6. What is Paul trying to establish by reminding the reader that Jesus is Lord of the whole universe – not just that which we can see and experience in our own life?

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