

The Greatest Hero of all Time

What picture comes to mind when you think of Jesus?

- Jesus with sheep?
- Jesus playing a harp?
- Jesus with the children?
- Jesus crucified?

Who is Jesus? And why is he the greatest Hero of all time?

- This is certainly impossible to cover this in one talk.

So, maybe consider this morning as pre-quall ...

- To a series that we will start on the 14th of Jan. 2018
- Entitled: Who is the Man – Seeing and Savoring the Supremacy of Christ

Today though, I hope to make at least a few brush strokes on a canvas.

- Painting even just a dim outline of a picture of Jesus
- That will prayerfully inspire you to dig into the scriptures
- And find him there for yourself.

We are going to be reading from **Colossians 1:15-23**

- And as we read you can follow on the side screens.
- If you are in the overflow hall, it will be at the bottom of your screen

CONTEXT

- Paul is writing a letter to the church in Colossia.
- He is excited to hear that the gospel ...
 - The Good News about who Jesus is
 - And all that God is for us in him.
- Is bearing fruit not only in their lives ...
- But also in the lives of people all around the world.

He then tells them that he is continually praying for them.

- That God will fill them with an intimate knowledge of his will ...
- Of his design & purpose for their lives.

And he prays this so that they may ...

- Live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.
- Be bearing fruit in every good work.
- Be strengthened with his power.

- Have great endurance and patience as they live this new life.
- In God's new world.

And that they will be Joyfully give thanks to the father, because ...

1. It is the Father who has rescued them from the dominion of darkness ...
2. It is the Father who has qualified them to share ...
 - In the future inheritance off the New Heaven & Earth.
3. It is the Father who has forgiven their sins, redeemed them ...
 - And brought them into his new world.

And the Father has done all of this through his Son/ Jesus Christ?

He then goes into this rapid-fire description as to who the son is.

Colossians 1:15¹⁵ The Son ...

The name **Jesus** (English) comes from the Greek is **(Iēsous)**,

- That comes from the Hebrew name **Yeshua** (as in Joshua).
- That means, **"YHWH saves!"** or **"YHWH is salvation."**

Christ, is not his surname.

- The word Christ/ **Christo's**/ Messiah all means ...
- **= The Anointed King.**

That is what the Jewish people of Jesus time were waiting for ...

- An anointed King that would free them from the evil Pagan empires
- Restore their temple to its former glory.
- So that YHWH could dwell among them once again.

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God ...

In the Old Testament, we read that no man has ever seen God.

When Moses needed some encouragement in leading the Israelites

- Through the desert, he said to God ...

Exodus 33:18–20 ¹⁸ ... Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” [your splendor, beauty &

majesty.] I need some encouragement here.

¹⁹ And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, YHWH, in your presence ...

²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

So, up to this point in time ...

- No one has ever seen God ...
- Or at least seen God and lived to tell the tale.

But now, Paul says, the invisible God has been made visible ...

- In and through Jesus, “The Anointed King.”

That which was unknown before, can now be known.

- Because Jesus is the **Image** (or in Greek) the **Eikon** of God.

The word “Eikon” in classical Greek had to do with **a dye, or a stamp.**

- In New Testament Greek, it has to do with an ...
- **Exact replica or a precise copy.**
- Today I think the closest word would be a photograph.

So, **the Son** (Jesus – The anointed King) **IS** the “photograph”, or in the language of our day, the **#Selfie** of the invisible God ...

Jesus wasn’t created in the image of God, like we are.

- He IS God’s image.
- He IS the exact replica.
- He IS the precise copy of God.
- He IS the #selfie of God.

In **John 14:8-9** Philip, one of Jesus disciples said, **“Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”**

““Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

To call Jesus the image or eikon of God

- Is to say that he is the perfect portrait.
- He is YHWH, in human flesh.

So, what does YHWH in the flesh look like?

- YHWH in the flesh feeds the poor.
- YHWH in the flesh heals the sick.
- He touches lepers.
- He hangs out with the “sinners.”
- He reaches out to the down trodden.
- And YHWH in the flesh, calls people to repentance.
- ...

He ... is the image of the invisible God, and then he continues the firstborn over all creation.

What does that mean? Firstborn?

- Was Jesus created by God?

By no means!

- The Greek word for “firstborn” – “Protô-tô-kos” ...
- Does not indicate birth order ...
- BUT describes his position and his rank.

That He is superior over all creation.

- He has the right to rule, he is the heir ...
- The ranking one, the one in authority.

In the “Jewish mind” of Jesus time ...

- The firstborn was the one who inherited everything.

So, Paul is saying that Jesus (the Anointed King sent by God) ...

- Is the heir (or recipient) of all of creation?

He IS the ranking one!

- He IS the supreme one!
- His IS the highest Ruler.

Or as the apostle John says in the book of Revelations

- He IS “The King of kings and Lord of lords.” Revelations 19:16

Why is he the ranking one over all of the Cosmos?

He continues ... ¹⁶ **FOR** ^[here is the reason] **by him** ^[Jesus – the Anointed King sent by God] **all things**
were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether
thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created BY him ^[by Jesus]
and FOR him. ^[Jesus]

Jesus ^[the Anointed King] is the one through whom God made all things.

- And he is the one FOR whom God made all things.

Whether thing in heaven and on earth.

- Visible and invisible, thrones and power ...
- Rulers and authorities.
- All things were made by him and for him.

All things on EARTH.

- The ocean, the rivers, the sunset, the sunrise.
- The Victoria falls, the Amazon forest, the Namibian desert.

From the smallest ant to the biggest elephant

- Were all created by Jesus and FOR Jesus ...
- To in some way or the other ...
- Display the splendor of Jesus, to the universe.

All things on earth and all things in HEAVEN.

- The sun, the moon, the stars, the galaxies.
- The New Jerusalem, the city of pure gold ...
- That is decorated with jasper, and sapphire and emerald.
- That will one day come from Heaven to Earth

All of it will glow with the glory, the splendor and the beauty of Jesus.

Each harp that will play ...

- Each palm of victory that will be waved ...
- Each shout of triumph, each song of adoration.
- All of heaven shall ring with the praises of Jesus.

The apostle John gives us a bit of a picture of this in Revelations 5

Revelation 5:11–14 ¹¹ Then I looked [he is having a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem] and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.

They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, [referring to Jesus] who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb [to Jesus] be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” ¹⁴

The four living creatures [that surrounded the throne] said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

There will be absolutely nothing and no one in the new heaven and new earth

- That will be offensive or critical to Jesus in any way.

Everyone and everything there will be to his praise and splendor.

- There will be no self-righteous Pharisees looking down on others.
- There will be no blasphemous atheist shouting, “There is no God.”
- There will be no “one” person trying to Lord it over another.

There will be no hard-hearted self-consumed, egocentric folk saying

- “I can do and live however I want to.”

There will be no one there who will be indifferent to Jesus.

- There will be no one there just mildly interested in Jesus
- OR just doing their Duty for Jesus.

No! Every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, [will all be] singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb [to Jesus, the Anointed King] be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” Revelations 5:13-14

We were created by him and for him in order to become more like him.

- In order to be members of his body, members of his family.
- So that his life will be ours.
- And our life will be His.

Along with all of creation, we came into being [into existence] for Jesus.

- We came into existence, to display the magnitude of his splendor.
- In every random act of kindness, compassion, servitude or grace.

Nothing! Nothing in the universe exists for its own sake.

- Everything from the bottom of the oceans ...
- To the top of the mountains.
- From smallest particle to the biggest star.
- From the most boring school subject to the most fascinating science.
- From the ugliest cockroach to the most beautiful human being.

Exists to make the greatness of Christ ...

- More fully known throughout the universe as we know it.

Paul continues with his rapid fire description ...

- Almost saying like a Verimark add, that's not all ...

¹⁷ **He** [Jesus – the Anointed King] **is before all things ...**

- He existed in eternity past.
- He did not just come “into being” in the manger in Bethlehem.

His **IS** ¹³ **... the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.’ Revelation 22:13**

Jesus completely flawed the Jews of his time when he said to them, **“... before Abraham was born, I AM.” John 8:58**

He **IS** both the root of David and offspring of David.

- He is both the source of David and the son of David.

He is before all things.

- He is the Preexisting one.

¹⁷ **...and IN HIM all things hold together.**

Do you realize that the universe as we know it ...

- Is kept together by the power of his word.

Every morning Jesus says BE and we are.

- And one day he will not!
- And life as we know it will cease to be.
- Books will be opened, judgments will be made.

- And there will be a New Heaven and a New Earth.
- And some will be a part of it and some will not.

Paul continues ...

- Thus far, he has described Jesus relation to the Father
- Him being the Eikon of God.

He has described his relation to creation.

- That it was created by him and for him.
- He was before it all and he holds it all together.

And he now moves on to his relation to the church.

¹⁸ And he [Jesus – The Anointed King] IS the head of the body, the church ...

Everyone who is “in Christ” becomes a part of the body of Christ.

- And Jesus, Paul says, IS the head of that body.
- Not the pope, not the bishop, not the pastor.

He IS the one, that sets the direction for HIS church.

- There is no power struggle or competition as to who is in charge.
- There is no higher authority in the church, than Jesus himself.
- He is the head of the Church!

... he [Paul continues] IS the beginning ...

He is the one who gave birth to his church.

- He is the one who brought HIS CHURCH to life.
- He is the one who sustains it, grows it and builds it.
- It is not our clever ideas or plans.
- He is the source of its power.

... he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead ...

What does that mean? First born from among the dead?

- He was not the first person to rise from the dead.

In the Old Testament people were raised from the dead.

- In the New Testament, he raised Lazarus from the dead.
- When he died, many were raised from the dead.

He is not the first one, but he is the chief one.

- Remember our word “Protô-tô-kos?”

He is the highest ranking one, He is the supreme one.

- He is the one who through his resurrection.
- Opened up the door to God’s new world.

GOING TO FLIP-CHART

In the beginning “our space” and “God’s space” were one.

- When Adam and Even sinned.
- Mankind was kicked out of God’s space.

But God wanted those spaces to be together.

- But he couldn’t because he was Holy and set-apart.
- And mankind was rebellious, defiant and disobedient.

So, he instructed Moses to build a tent or a tabernacle.

- Where he would be able to dwell among his people.
- In the tent, above the mercy seat ...
- Which was the top of the Ark of the covenant.

Later on, this tabernacle was replaced by a Temple.

But even while God dwelled among the people.

- They kept on rebelling, they kept on being defiant.

So, he warned them.

- If you guys don’t stop and repent of your ways.
- I will depart from the temple.
- The city will become defenseless.
- The Babylonians will come destroy both the city and the temple.

But, the people kept on worshiping idols.

So, in Ezekiel 10 and 11 ...

- We see the glory of the Lord leaving the temple.

Ezekiel 10:4 ⁴ Then the glory of the Lord rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the

court was full of the radiance of the glory of the Lord.

Next to the cherubim were whirling wheels with the appearance of crystallite

- The glory of God went from the Threshold back to the cherubim.
- The cherubim spread their wings, the rose from the ground.
- The wheels went with them.
- They stopped at the East Gate of the temple.
- Then went to the Mountains of the East and it was gone.

Shortly after that, the Babylonians came ...

- And destroyed both the city and the temple.

For six centuries the Jews lived in slavery ...

- With random and unclear promises of God's presence returning
- And him sending an anointed king to deliver them from evil.

Almost 600 years' pass.

John 1:14 ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and tabernacled [made his dwelling] among us.
We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father ...

Jesus came to bring God's space back to our space.

- And through his death burial and resurrection.
- He was the firstborn into this new world/ the overlap.

And all of us who joyfully and eagerly submit our lives to his rule and reign ...

- Are able to enter than new world through Jesus.
- ...

... he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead ...
so that in everything he might have the supremacy ...

He is all these things so that it will be clear to all of the universe.

- That he is **Lord of the world**.
- And that after his resurrection he now has ...
- All power and all authority over all of the Cosmos.

There is no one else in the category of Jesus.

- There is only one "Anointed King"

- There is only one “Messiah”, only one “Christ.”

He is unique. He is incomparable.

- He is matchless in every possible way ...
- And on all possible fronts.

Not Buddha or Mohammed or the Dalai Lama or ...

- Any other spiritual leader or guru ...
- Who has ever lived ...
- Is in the category with Jesus Christ

He has the supremacy.

- He is the Eikon of God.
- He is first in rank ...
- He is the agent and the goal and the forerunner ...
- And the sustainer and the governor of all creation.

He is Supreme.

- HE IS LORD OF THE WORLD!

¹⁹ **FOR** [Paul continues in v.19]

For **God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him** [in Jesus] **...**

Paul is saying that “the powers” of deity and “the attributes” of deity ...

- Were not distributed among a multitude of beings ...
- Throughout the universe.

It was all given to “one being” ...

- Jesus, the Anointed King, the Son of God.
- In Him should all the fullness of God dwell.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him ²⁰ and through him
[through Jesus] **to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in**
heaven ...

God was pleased to through him reconcile to himself all of creation.

How did he do it?

... BY making peace through [Jesus’s] **his blood shed on the cross.**

So, since the “fall of man” in Genesis 3 ...

- All of creation, all the universe has been alienated ...
- And separated from God.

And now through Jesus, God has reconciled to himself all things.

- By making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

Somehow through the blood of Jesus ...

- There is now an opportunity for all of creation.
- To be rescued from the slavery sin.

All of creation now has the opportunity ...

- To have our sins forgiven.

All of creation now has the opportunity ...

- To enter God’s new world and live his new way of life.

Then he reminds them that before they were in Jesus.

- They were not part of God’s new world.

He says, remember that ... ²¹ **Once you were alienated from God ...**

- You were estranged, you were without hope and without God.

As a matter of fact, you ... **“were enemies in your minds”** (hostile in attitude) **because of your evil behavior**

Because you were **“... gratifying the cravings of your flesh and following its desires and thoughts.” Ephesians 2:3**

²² **But now he** [God] **has reconciled you ...**

- He has made you friends again.

How? How did he do it?

- How did he reconcile you?

BY Christ’s physical body through death to present you [to enable you to stand before him]
holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation ...

²³ **IF you continue in your faith,** [if you continue with this new way of life in this new world that God has

opened up to you] **established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.**

He says, guys, never forget how blessed you are.

- Never forget the hope that you have ...
- In Jesus, through Jesus and because of Jesus.

Once you were alienated from God.

- You were alienated from him ...
- Because you were gratifying the cravings of the flesh.
- You were following every desire and thought.
- You were enslaved and entangled by sin.

But he has now rescued you from the dominion of darkness.

- He has broken the hold that sin had on you.
- And he has opened up a door into God's new world for you.

Where you can now live a new life to the glory and the splendor ...

- Of our Father in Heaven.
- And bear his love and wisdom and kindness and favour into our world.

That is why is Jesus the greatest hero of all time?

In 1926 James Allan Francis a Baptist minister said of Jesus ...

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves.

While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat.

When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

Jesus Christ is without a doubt the Greatest Hero of all Time!