

(Colossians) Christ: The Head of the Church

by Brian Brodersen

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and his ongoing communication and ministry are through the word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:00:50

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 5:24, John 14:25, John 15:26, John 16:12-14, Colossians 1:18

Topics: "Christology", "Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by praising and worshiping God through Jesus Christ. He acknowledges the rebellious and plotting nature of the world and prays for strength and faith to carry out the work of rescuing people from darkness. The preacher highlights Psalm 2 as a prophecy of today, where the nations rage against God and plot to break free from Him. He emphasizes the absence of fear of God in modern society and warns of the judgment and destruction that will come without it. The preacher also mentions that even scientists are now admitting that the universe had a beginning, contradicting the idea of eternal matter.

Transcript

Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. Over the past several weeks, we've been taking an in-depth look at Paul's description of Jesus Christ given to us in verses 15 through 19 or even into verse 20 actually. And what Paul is doing is he's putting forth Christ in a very positive and in a very powerful manner in order to refute the false teaching that was entering into the church of Colossae or at least was trying to enter in. And so rather than going through a long drawn-out argument against the false teaching, he just puts Christ forth in all of his glory, all of his splendor, all of his majesty, shows him for who he is and that is a sufficient apologetic.

So we've been taking this portion of scripture and we've been breaking it down and looking at it. And although I am anxious to move on in Colossians, I feel that we need one more day, one more time of considering this passage again and particularly verse 18. So we're going to look once again today at verse 18.

Last time we looked at verse 18, we concentrated more on the church, what the church is and so forth. We've talked a little bit about Christ being the head of the church, but today we want to talk more specifically about the things that are said in verse 18 concerning Jesus. So let me read you verse 18.

And he, Jesus Christ, is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may have the preeminence. Christ is the head of the body. There's nowhere in the Bible that gives us any indication whatsoever that a day would come when any man should be named the head of the church.

But tragically that happened. The bishop of Rome became acknowledged by many as the head of the church back in the 6th century or so. The orthodox churches, they have the patriarchs whom they acknowledge to be the heads of the church or the archbishops or the metropolitans.

The Anglican church and many of the European state churches have as the head of the church the monarch of the particular nation. And even here in our country and even among evangelicals, although it's not as obvious, men have usurped the place of Christ as head of the church. Jesus is the head of the church today and any organization calling itself a church that has placed a man in the position of being the head is no longer the church according to the Bible.

No longer the church according to the Bible. So Catholicism's claim to being the church, the one true church, is an erroneous claim. It's not true.

It's not true at all because it has been severed from the head having put over itself a man in the position of leadership. The pope is known as the vicar of Christ. He is the human representation of Christ on the earth.

That's the claim of the Roman church. Absurd and contrary to all that we have written for us in the scriptures. Jesus Christ, according to Paul the apostle, is the head of the church.

He's the head of the church presently. He's the head of the church today and the most intelligent thing that the church could ever do is allow him that rightful position. Any church that would remove Christ from being head over it ceases to be a church really.

It ceases to be that special group of people that God has called out from the world and becomes just another religious group or philosophical center. Another place where man's thoughts and ideas and wisdom are exalted and submitted to. Jesus is today the head of the church.

He is the head of the church and as the head of the church he directs the affairs of the church. He leads the body of Christ. He does so collectively.

He does so individually and he does this through his word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He does it through his word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You see way way back in church history they got to thinking that we need to take charge.

We need to be in control over this. You can't trust people. They need to have some authority over them.

They can't properly interpret the Bible and they're going to end up in heresy. So we have to become the the keepers and we have to begin to rule over and to dictate to people what they are to believe and so forth. Then eventually that that eroded more and more to where the leaders themselves departed from the word of God.

Having departed right there at that moment actually because when Paul the apostle left Ephesus he did not put any man in charge of them. He did not commend them to any superior. He commended them to

the word of God.

He said I commend you to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance. I commend you to the word of God. That's what the apostles did but the early church fathers were not able to trust the Lord and so they began to take a position of authority and their word became superior to the word of God.

And in history the history of the church has just been repetitious of that very thing happening to some degree or another. The authority in the church is to be the word of God. It is the word of God and the spirit of God that Jesus Christ uses to guide us and to lead us and to direct us as his people.

This is how we stay connected to the head. This is how the various members of the body of Christ function by staying individually and collectively connected to the head. We're connected to the head through the word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now from cover to cover the bible sets a high priority upon the word. All the way through God's written word is put in a very exalted position. Not only in the old testament is that obvious but in the new testament it is very clear.

Jesus put so much emphasis on his words. Just a quick run through the gospel of John will show you the emphasis that the Lord put upon his words and how it's through his word that we stay vitally connected to him. And I know there are people who wonder why we always talk about the word at Calvary Chapel.

And I've had people say concerning me, oh Brian's always saying the same thing. I'm so sick of going to every he's always talking about the word. You see we're talking about your lifeline.

We're talking about your connection to Jesus Christ. That's why we talk about it all the time. It's so vital.

You cannot function apart from it. You can't grow without it. I did receive a positive letter this week.

An encouraging letter just a young lady just wrote to just thank me for giving her a great appreciation for the word of God and how it's transformed her life. And so you know you can take a few slaps in the face and that's okay. And then you get those where you see you know yeah God is working and but the word is so vital.

And that's not something that we just say because we don't have anything better to say. That's what the bible says over and over and over and over. It's repetitious.

The word of God. And as you look at the long history of the church the failure of the church on every point can be attributed to one thing. Departing from the word of God.

That's it. And of course some people have departed completely. There are those today that call themselves Christians who are no more Christians than the devil is.

They call themselves theologians. And and yet they've entirely departed from the faith. They deny that this is the word of God and they deny everything in it.

And yet they're bishops, they're cardinals, they're elders and deacons and churches and so forth. But they have no connection to the head. And then of course there are those who have departed in lesser degrees.

But to but to the degree that you depart from the word of God and place human thought, human theory, human wisdom in the place of it, to that degree you will suffer as a Christian. And to that degree a congregation will suffer. To the degree you depart from the word of God, to that same degree you'll suffer.

Means severed to a degree from the head. So as as we go through the scriptures in the New Testament we see clearly the emphasis Jesus himself placed upon the word. Let's run quickly through John's gospel and look at what he said about his word beginning in chapter 5 verse 24.

I'm just going to take you real quickly through these because of our time limitations. But John chapter 5 24, Jesus said, most assuredly I say to you he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. Hears my word.

Over in chapter 6 verse 63, Jesus said the words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life. Over in chapter 8 verses 31 and 32, if you abide in my word you are my disciples indeed and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Abiding in his word.

Now skipping over to chapter 12, chapter 12 verse 46, I have come as a light into the world that whoever believes in me should not abide in darkness and if anyone hears my words and does not believe I do not judge him for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my words has that which judges him. The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day for I have not spoken on my own authority but the father who sent me gave me a command that I should say and what I should speak.

You see there are people today who find no problem in disregarding his words but yet claim to be his followers. You can't do it. It's a virtual impossibility.

You either take Christ at his word or you don't take him at all. He's not going to be received apart from his word and so he emphasizes over and over again his word. Chapter 14 verse 25 these things I have spoken to you oh excuse me verse 23 Jesus answered and said to him if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my father will love him and will come to him and make our home with him.

He who does not love me does not keep my words and so right there is the proof for those men who claim to be theologians and claim to be followers of Jesus but deny the new testament as a revelation of Jesus Christ deny the inspiration of the scriptures they do not love him at all. He says that he says it right here very clearly. He who does not love me does not keep my words and the word which you hear is not mine but the father's who sent me.

Over in chapter 15 look at verse 7 if you abide in me and my words abide in you if you abide in me and my words abide in you and we could go on and on of course throughout the other gospels into the book of acts and on through the epistles over and over again the exhortation to be in the word to abide in the word to conform to the word because it's through the word and the ministry of the holy spirit that christ as the head directs the church today but even through the ministry of the holy spirit there is a there is an a tie to the word of god that cannot be broken you see because all that we know of the holy spirit we learn through the scriptures so the holy spirit works hand in hand with the word of god there are people who get caught up in something they believe is a work of the holy spirit but because it contradicts the word of god it's not the holy spirit at all it's the human spirit at best and it's an evil spirit at worst you see the holy spirit is never going to work in contradiction to the written word of god the holy spirit and the word of god of course the the the written word of god is the word of the holy spirit he's the inspiration behind it so there can be no

conflict between the ministry of the holy spirit and the ministry of the word in chapter 14, verse 25. These things I have spoken to you while being present with you, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. So now Jesus is introducing the ministry of the Holy Spirit over in verse 26 of chapter 15.

But when the helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me. And then over in chapter 16, verses 12 through 14, I still have many things to say to you, Jesus said to his apostles, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak.

And he will tell you things to come. He will glorify me for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you. So you see, this is how the Lord, the head of the church, Jesus Christ, this is how he directs.

This is how he speaks to. This is how he leads and guides and ministers to his people. It's through his word.

So we today are the church of God under the headship, not of any man, not of me, not of Pastor Chuck, because he's the original founder of the Calvary Chapel Movement, and not of any man. The day that this movement becomes centered on a man is the day it begins to deteriorate. The day any church becomes centered on a man, it's the day it begins to go down.

You see, Jesus is the head of the church, and his ongoing communication and ministry to the church are through the word of God and through the spirit of God. Understanding that, we then can see clearly to the degree that we depart from the word of God, to that same degree we'll suffer. And so really, truly, it should be our greatest goal to never depart from the word at all, not to one degree, not in any way, shape, or form.

You know, people wonder, and people get irritated, I know, and they don't understand why I have to say things that I say. Why are you always talking about Dobson? Why are you always talking about psychologists? Why are you putting down these teachers and so forth? Because they've departed from the word of God. That's it, you see? And they're human beings, and they're accountable to God, and they need to be called into account.

And listen to me, if I ever depart from the word of God, I pray somebody will stand up and do what I'm doing and say, you have departed from the word of God. I pray that that will happen. I pray that I never will.

I trust in God's grace that I never will. But you see, that's the issue right there. It's not a personal vendetta.

I don't have anything personally against any one of these men. It's not a matter of opinion either, as some people say, oh, well, that's just your opinion. No, we're talking about human teaching versus the word of God, the inspired word of God.

And we have to be on our guard, and anyone who is a shepherd of the flock who's worth that title is a person who is going to give the word of God preeminence and is going to contend against those things that come against the authority of the word of God in the life of an individual and in the life of a church. That is my responsibility before God. I have to answer to him, not to you or to anyone else.

That's why I do what I do, because I know that I'll give an account to him. And so that's why, because if you understand how important this is, and if you look at the history of the church, hands down, this is always the problem. There's never another issue that's destroyed the church.

It's always been this one, a departure from the word of God. You could look at everything that's ever happened in church history from day one, all of the problems, everything from some of the minor issues to things like the Inquisition and the Crusades and all the kinds of crazy things that went on in the Middle Ages. And in every single case, you find this one common denominator, they've departed from the word of God.

See, that is the problem. And if you depart from the word of God in any way, shape, or form, if you allow the influence and the teaching of man to come in and to take precedence over the word of God, you will suffer in your life as a Christian. And to the degree that you do that, to that same degree, you will suffer.

I think one of the great problems today in the church is that there is no fear of God. And why is there no fear of God in the church today? Because pastors have not taught the reality of the wrath of God. They've not taught the reality of the wrath of God.

Now, no one likes to stand up and talk about judgment. I mean, it's not a pleasant subject, and yet it's in the scriptures. And when we come to it in the scriptures, we have to address it.

We can't pretend like it's not there. But because so many people have not wanted to do that, we have an epidemic of sin in the church today. Now, I just heard a story this past week from a friend of mine who went through this drawn-out ordeal with this person who was labeled a pedophile.

This person had been in prison for child molestation and so forth. And yet this person came to his church and said, I want to be part of the church, and this is my background, and these are the things that I've done, and I want to be up front with people. And so he said, okay, we'll let you be up front with us.

And he sat down with the elders, and they all began to quiz this individual and go through things, and they put restrictions on him and things he could do and couldn't do, and they were going to watch him like a hawk, and all of this was going on. But in the course of the conversation, the pastor who was dealing individually with this man, he challenged him, he said, you're not born again. You've never been born again.

He said, oh, but I am. I was born again when I was four years old. And he said, no, I don't buy that.

You're not born again. And then on and on, and the man would never come to that place of admission that he wasn't truly a Christian. And so what can you do? You're dealing with a person, you're going back and forth, and no, no, brother, but I'm really a Christian, and I'm changed, and I want to do this, and everything's going to be different now.

So they gave him the benefit of the doubt. They said, okay, we will allow you to be part of the fellowship. These are the conditions, and know this, that you're going to be watched.

A few days later, it was reported in the papers that he was exposing himself to children down at the beach in San Diego, and now going up for a possible life sentence, a three strikes and you're out deal. And as I was talking to my friend about this, both of us concluded there is no fear of God before his eyes. He has no fear of God.

He has no concept. Somehow he's missed it, and I think it's quite easy to miss in the modern church because nobody's bringing it up, that that will bring the judgment of God upon your life. God will destroy you.

He will judge you eternally for those things. But because that message is absent today, there's no fear of God. Nobody fears God.

Nobody fears anything. And we even have it on T-shirts, and a company has made millions of dollars through the slogan, no fear. We have no fear, but yet there is indeed a wrath of God that is coming.

And you see, it's in these areas that they seem subtle, or they are subtle. They seem to be not so important, but it's because the church has departed from these truths that the church and the world are in the condition that it's in today. It's because the church is willing to believe philosophers and psychologists and theorizers over the word of God that there's confusion in the church today.

Oh, but these people said that alcoholism is a disease. They've discovered that, they've proved it now. We can't be treating alcoholics harshly, or we can't deal with them like sinners.

We can't tell them that they're gonna be judged because they have a disease. Did you know that alcoholism is a disease? If you believe that, you're a fool, especially if you say you're a Christian and you believe that, because you are contradicting what the Bible says. The Bible says alcoholism is a sin.

Sure, it has physical ramifications to it, and most certainly it can produce an addictive state. There's no denying that, those are facts. But it is not a disease, it is sin.

It's a result of choices that people make, wrong choices, and they get in bondage to sin. It gets power over them and they can't get out of it. And the same is true with drugs, the same is true with sexual behavior, all of those things.

You see, we have the world's model that says it's normal, it's genetic, it's disease, whatever, there's all kinds of models. And this is the pathetic thing. The church says, oh, hey, they told us that it's not really sin.

So the Bible must be wrong. No, the Bible is right. They are wrong.

You see, and we've got to stand on that. That's what we've got to stand on. That's what the apostles stood on.

That's why they were persecuted. That's why they suffered. And that's why anybody throughout the history of the church who has stood up and stood on the authority of the word has generally suffered for it.

But so be it. God will vindicate us. God will show in his time the truth.

And I love Paul's statement to the Romans, let God be true and every man a liar. I love that statement. And it's one I take refuge in quite often.

Let God be true and every man a liar. But they said this. Yeah, they tell us the earth is 10 billion years old, 15 billion years old.

They can't prove anything. Actually, all scientific proof contradicts everything they say, but oh, they're standing firm on it. Why are they standing firm on it? Because they reject the word of God.

And again, the tragedy and what I'm preaching about right here is the church, the church coming under the authority of man, listening to the wisdom of men, embracing the teaching of man against the teaching of the word of God and being severed to whatever degree they embrace it, being severed from the head and no longer functioning truly as the body of Christ is to function. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. And he rules over us, guides us, leads us, directs us, comforts us, exhorts us, heals us.

Whatever needs done, needs being done as far as our soul and spirit go, he does it through his word. He does it through his word. Hold fast to the word of God.

But know this, the devil will try with everything that he has to shake your faith in it. And after all, he's shaken the faith of multitudes. You know, there's a man, his name is Robert Funk.

He's a funky guy. He gave him the right name at his birth. He's the head of this thing called the Jesus Seminar.

The Jesus Seminar are a bunch of idiots who claim to be intelligent, who reject the Bible and everything that Jesus stands for and said and did and so forth. I make no apologies for that. That's exactly what they are.

David said, I hate them with perfect hatred that hate thee, O God. And these men hate God. But you know, this man was one time a revival preacher.

He one time was a circuit evangelist in Texas. And now he is a great opponent of the Christian faith. He's a great opponent of the Christian faith.

He's calling for a new reformation. And the fact that many people are laughing at him doesn't bother him. He compares himself with Martin Luther.

He said, they didn't take Luther seriously either. They're not taking me seriously, but I'm calling for a new reformation. We need to shed all of the traditional and all of the mythological aspects of the gospel of Christ.

And we need to realize that Jesus was nothing more than a first century Lenny Bruce or David Letterman. Just a wisecracking Jew who was ahead of his time. He had figured out Marxist philosophy and all of these things long before these guys ever came around.

And he was a revolutionary. He was out to overthrow the political system. This is what he says about him.

And he says that the church, his statement is the church is anemic and the church is irrelevant and out of touch. And it needs to once and for all be buried and put to death and rise up with this new reformation, this new Jesus, the human Jesus, the revolutionary Jesus. This is so sad.

It's so sad because this man claims to be a Christian and many people take him for being a Christian. But my point is this, he was at one time apparently a believer. I don't know that he actually ever really was.

I have my doubts, but he was at least a preacher at one time. He was going out in evangelistic campaigns and telling people they needed to turn to Jesus. But now he's telling people that they need to turn against the Jesus of the Bible.

The devil will try to destroy your faith in the word of God. He will be relentless in that pursuit. And in any way he can, he will try to undermine the authority of the scriptures.

He's done it historically. He's been very effective. And we must always be on our guard.

We must hold the scriptures precious to us because this is the lifeline. This is the connection. This is the communication source through which we know the truth, what is right and wrong.

This is how we know the Lord leading us and guiding us and ministering to us and speaking to us. And apart from the word, we have really no hope. The word and the Holy Spirit working together.

And so Jesus Christ, he is the head of the church. Who is the beginning? And so Paul says now here concerning him that he is the beginning. Now he has already said that he is the beginning of the creation.

Actually, John said that in Revelation, but Paul tells us here in our text that Jesus Christ is the creator. So he's the author of the original creation. He's the author of the material universe.

He's the one who created it. But now he says he is the beginning of something else. He's the beginning of a new creation.

The church of Jesus Christ is a new creation. You see, God created the world through Jesus and the world was good. God's original creation was good.

In six days, the Lord created the heaven and the earth. The seventh day he rested. He looked at all of his works and he said, it is good.

It was all good, but something happened. Sin entered in and sin defiled, ruined the original creation. Sin caused the original creation to be irrevocably lost.

And so the Lord started a new creation. Now the first creation began with the material universe and climaxed with man, whom the universe was created for. The new creation starts with men and will climax with the material universe being recreated.

Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth, the Bible says, but the new creation has begun with people. You see, that's what the gospel is doing right now. The gospel is going forth and as people are embracing it by faith, a new creation is taking place right at that moment.

You see, Jesus is the head of a new humanity. He's the head of a new family. And so he is the beginning of this new creation, this thing that we call the church.

This is the new creation that's gonna go on and inherit the renewed heaven and earth that the Lord will make. So it's through our faith in Christ that we experience this new creation. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17, that if any man or woman is in Christ, they are a new creation.

Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. You see, that's what the Lord says there at the end of the book of Revelation. He who sits on the throne says, behold, I make all things new.

That's what the Lord's doing. He's making all things new and he's starting with you. He's starting with me.

He's starting with people. That's what the church is. It's a new society.

It's a new creation, literally, that will one day enter into this new realm that God will create specifically for us, this new heaven and this new earth. Jesus is the author of the original creation, but the original creation became marred through sin. And so the Lord came to die for our sin.

He rose again and he is now the beginning of a new creation. What a glorious thing to think about what's happened to us in those terms. A new creation, that's what we are.

Something entirely new, God does. That's why becoming a Christian is such a radical thing. And that's why we have to question the validity of a person's conversion when they claim to become a Christian, but there's no evidence of it in their life because the Bible says you're a new creation.

A new creation is noticeable. Something's taken place. And of course, when it's legitimate, when it's genuine, we see that.

Oh, you can think of people I'm sure. I know I can. I can think of myself.

And you can probably think of yourself too, but I can think of many people who I remember how they were before meeting Christ. And to see them now, the only explanation is they are a new creation. This is not the same person.

You see, that's when this born again experience is legitimate. Now there are many people who are claiming to be Christians, but there's no proof. There's no evidence.

There's no sense of a new creation there. And that's where you must ask yourself a question. Am I truly a new creation in Christ? Have I really believed in him? Have I put my faith and my trust in him? Not meaning that those who are a new creation are problem free, or even that we're entirely sin free, but meaning that a drastic change has taken place.

And although we still sin, we do not practice sin as we once did. And there is a power, a new dynamic working in our lives that sets us free systematically from sin and the bondage of sin. And so he is the beginning.

He's the head of the body of the church. He is the beginning. And then finally, Paul says, he is the firstborn from the dead.

The firstborn from the dead. Now this we've talked about in the past, but let me just remind you, there's a twofold meaning here, really. The firstborn from the dead, meaning that he is the first to be raised from the dead, to never experience death again.

Other people were raised from the dead in the past. In the Old Testament, Elijah, Elisha, both raised people from the dead. Jesus, of course, raised people from the dead.

But yet all of those people, having been resurrected, lived on and died again. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead to never die again. So in that sense, he's the firstborn from among the dead.

But in another sense, the word firstborn, as we pointed out in the past, it means the one who holds supremacy, the most illustrious one. He's referred to in verse 15 as the firstborn over all creation. In other words, he's the one who's supreme over all other things.

And in this area of those who rise from the dead, he is supreme in that area also. But it's this whole issue of his resurrection from the dead that puts him in a category all by himself. You see, this is the thing that people are unwilling to acknowledge about Jesus Christ.

Some people are ignorant of it, but other people are willfully ignorant. They do not want to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is entirely unique. You see, that's why we cannot compare him with other people.

We cannot put him in the same category as they are. It's an absurdity to compare him to other religious leaders. To do that, we have to deny everything the Bible says about him.

The Bible says that he was entirely unique in his life. He was sinless. He's entirely unique in his teaching, although much of his teaching is just an elaboration on what was said previously by Moses and the prophets.

Yet there is an aspect of his teaching that is entirely unique. He and he alone brought a full revelation about his giving his life and dying for our sins and so forth. So he's unique in his life, he's unique in his teaching, but the thing that he is also unique in is this one issue of his resurrection from the dead.

Death is the great equalizer. Death is the one thing that no matter how smart a person's been, no matter how well they could theorize and philosophize, no matter how capable they were as a human being in whatever area they functioned in, no matter how powerful they were, how extensive their domain was, when death came, death came, and there was nothing that could be done about it. There was no preventing it and there was no being delivered from it once it had taken them.

And of course, that is the case to this very day. You see, Jesus holds a unique place in all of history. He is the most illustrious person in the history of the world.

He holds a unique place because he's the only one who ever came back from the dead to never die again. He is the head of the church because he's alive today. You see, Jesus is the living Christ.

He was resurrected from the dead. And this is the thing that puts really the stamp of finality on the whole issue. What right does a living person with their human speculation have to speak with any authority about life after life and death and so forth? They have no right whatsoever.

The only one that has the right to do that is the one who died and came back from the dead. And his people can speak of it because they're speaking from his instruction. But you see, there are multitudes of people who take it upon themselves to become the spokesperson for these issues.

You know, the modern philosophers are nothing but people with big egos who thought they knew more than everybody else and thought that they should be able to tell everybody else how to live their lives. The interesting thing about them, none of them could live according to their own dictates. None of them, for the most part, even tried to live according to their own dictates.

There was a man back in the 1700s, he was born in Switzerland. His name was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. And he was a self-acclaimed philosopher.

And indeed, he has gone down historically as a philosopher because many of his philosophies are what are being worked out in our modern society. But this man, when you study his life, you find that he was nothing more than a con artist. He was a brilliant guy.

He had a big brain and he used it to his own advantage. But this guy thought that he knew how everybody ought to live. Of course, he never even attempted to live that way himself because he was a perfect man and didn't need to submit to those things.

He could do no wrong. This was his actual theorizing. Now this man, his philosophy on child development, child rearing, education, and so forth is a primary philosophy that is being embraced all over our world today.

That the child should be raised by the state. Did you know that that is where things are moving in this country? That's where things are going. The child is to be raised by the state.

We see it all the time. Parents no longer have any rights. Parents don't know.

Parents are all distorted and twisted because of their own upbringing and background. And the state, they're the ones who know what's best for the children. And so education of the children ought to be left to the professionals, to the experts, to the state.

Now this expert had five children, all of them illegitimate, all of them died in infancy because he refused to care for them, turned them over to the orphanages, and there they perished. The man was so absorbed with himself, he didn't have time to take care of his own five offspring. But this is the guy that's telling our modern world how to rear children, how to bring them up properly.

What authority does he have to speak? If a guy can't prove his philosophy by his own life, then he shouldn't be given a hearing at all. And in the biographies that have been written on this man and so forth, in interviews with all of his closest friends, they all said he was just an absolute jerk. They didn't use that term.

But synonyms, they had plenty of those. But that's exactly what they said about him. They were enamored with him initially.

They thought, oh, what a brilliant man, what a wonderful person, and oh, what a great person to know and be with. And yet, as time went on, they found he's a scoundrel. And a lady who knew him best, her statement concerning him summed him up, really she said he was quite an interesting madman.

But it's the philosophies of this madman and many others like him, we could go on and on with a list of these people, whose theories and ideas are holding sway over the minds of people today. And they think of Jesus Christ, and then, oh, he doesn't have anything to say to us. Oh, yes, he does.

These people have nothing to say to you, they're dead. They couldn't live out their own philosophy while they were here, and now they're dead, and they're never coming back. And quite honestly, they're under the wrath of God today, but Jesus lives.

He rose from the dead. And because he rose from the dead, he has the authority to speak. It is the proof that everything that he said about himself, which he demonstrated while he was here, it's the proof, the final and complete proof that he is indeed God, the Son.

When Paul was speaking to the Athenians there at Mars Hill, he was talking to them about their philosophies and about their various modes of worship. He said to them, he said, these times of ignorance, God has overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because there is

coming a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained. And he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

You see, how do we know that Jesus is going to be the judge of the world? God raised him from the dead. And in raising him from the dead, that was God's statement. This is my servant.

This is my son. This is the judge. He raised him from the dead.

John, in writing his account that was given to him on Patmos, the book of Revelation, in verse five, he said, from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler over the kings of the earth. He uses the same term here, the firstborn from the dead. And then over in verses 17 and 18, Jesus himself speaks in Revelation chapter one.

He says, do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. I am he who lives and was dead.

And behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death.

You see, Jesus Christ, he says, I was dead, but I'm alive. He has the authority to speak. And really, anyone who contradicts him is wrong.

It's as simple as that. Anyone who contradicts Jesus Christ and the New Testament revelation is wrong. That's all there is to it.

He has the authority and he alone, he was dead. Behold, he is alive forevermore. And he has the keys of Hades and death.

You see, Jesus has earned the right to speak. No other teacher, philosopher, religious leader has earned that right. They've all perished and they're gone.

Never to be heard of again. As you look at things today on a very large, large scale, we see that what was going on in Colossae is happening in our world today. And there is an attempt to affect every single church in the world with some sort of false doctrine to get people to depart from the revelation of God.

You see, in Colossae, what they were doing was essentially denying Christ. They were not giving to Jesus Christ his proper place, that of God. And that is virtually what is happening today and has been happening, really, throughout the history of the church.

It's been an attack against the deity of Christ, the person of Christ. The false religions will acknowledge him as a prophet, but that's as far as they will go. The philosophers will acknowledge him as a philosopher, a fellow, someone who had some interesting ideas and a good teacher, a moralist.

But he was nothing more than that. You see, that's what's happening today. And it's interesting, as you look at the world and as you look at what's going on, it's important that we be able to do this as Christian people.

As you look at all the issues that we face as a society, the multiculturalism, the racism, as you look at the issues like the moral issues of abortion and euthanasia and the whole issues of sexual relations and all of these different things, as you look at all these things, the thing that I think is very important for every one of us to see is that far beyond political, social, or even moral issues, these are all spiritual issues. And these are all manifestations of what Henry Morris referred to as the long war against God. That's what all these

things are.

They're just simply manifestations of the long war against God. It's man fighting against God. It's man attempting to once and for all break this yoke that God has had upon him.

And as you look at the legislation that's trying to be pushed through today, as you read the articles and the magazines and the different things in the newspapers, as you listen to the news commentators and you find it all over the world, it's the long war against God. It's mankind's attempt to throw off the authority of God. Man's been trying to do it for a long time, but it seems like the momentum is on man's side right now.

He seems to be, yeah, we're gonna do it. We're almost there. If we can just convince the church entirely and completely through scientific evidence or whatever that the Bible isn't true, then we can win.

That's what it's all about. That's what it's always been all about. But you know, one of the proofs to me of the truth of Jesus and the word of God is the fact that in all of the attempts throughout all of the ages to do away with Jesus Christ, one Jewish man, haven't been able to get rid of him.

Haven't been able to do it. His popularity just continues to grow. Oh, they think they squash him over in Eastern Europe through Lennon and those guys back at the turn of the century.

Oh, they thought they'd done it. They got rid of Jesus, kicked him out, became an atheistic state. But what happened a few years back when the Soviet Union opened up? What'd you find? There were a lot of people were still believers.

We need some Bibles, they said. We've been suffering a long time without them. We need the word of God.

You see, they couldn't keep Christ out. And while they were attempting to do it, oh, he was over working over here and over there and all over the place, and that's just the way it's been. Many emperors and kings and great rulers and the philosophers and the scientists and all these people.

It's all one big attempt to get rid of Christ, but you know what? They can't do it. They never will be able to do it. And in the end, Jesus Christ will be triumphant because he is the image of the invisible God.

He is the one who has supremacy over all creation. And you know what? They can't get rid of the church either. Oh, they wanna do that.

They wanna stomp out the church. And it appears to them that they've done a pretty good job, but all the church is still alive and well. Thank God for those faithful ones who still hold fast to his word.

And that will always be the case. We need to see things for what they are. And it is the long war against God.

It's a spiritual battle, but know this, you're on the side of the victor if you're a believer today. You're on the side of the one who's gonna win it all. And yet at the same time, we need to stand firm in our convictions.

We need to stand firm on the word of God. And we need to put forth Christ always in every situation as the firstborn, as the supreme one. That is our task in this world, to just keep putting forth Jesus Christ.

He is the answer. And although the whole world will never embrace it and the vast majority of people will reject it, yet there are those individuals that the Lord wants to bring into his family. He wants to make them a part of this new humanity through this miraculous work of a new creation being wrought within them.

And that's really what we're here to promote. And that's what we're here to carry out. We're here to carry out this work of rescuing people from the kingdom of darkness and seeing them translated into the kingdom of God and his dear son, who will one day in the not too distant future, he will one day make it clear who is the only potentate, the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

I wanna close with Psalm 2. Psalm 2 is a 3,000 year old prophecy of today. And oh, how accurate it is. Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing, the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Christ, saying, let us break their bonds and pieces and cast away their cords from us.

That is it right there. That's what's going on in the world around you. That is modern society.

It's coming to a head in modern society. The nations are raging. They're raging against God, aren't they? They're standing up and they're mocking God and they're mocking his word.

And what are they doing? They're plotting. They've got all of their schemes and all of their plans. It's a big plot.

And what are they plotting to do? They're plotting to break free from God. Once and for all, let's just get rid of this whole idea of a God. You know, it just keeps backfiring on them.

It just never quite works out. Even the scientists right now are having to admit that the whole universe is not eternal. Matter is not eternal, but there was a beginning.

Well, that's a blow to the scientific community, but they're having to admit it. The evidence is there. But you see, this is what they're trying to do.

But notice, it's a vain thing. In other words, it's a futile thing. It can't be done.

It cannot be done. Even though man is trying to do it, it cannot be done. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh.

The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then he shall speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his deep displeasure. Yet I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion.

I like that, yet. It's though the Lord is saying, in spite of all of your attempts, in spite of all your efforts, I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion. In other words, Jesus will rule.

He will reign. Just as the Bible says from Jerusalem, he will reign and rule. And he says right here in verse seven, the Lord Jesus Christ himself speaking to the spirit, I will declare the decree the Lord has said to me.

You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance.

The nations are raging. They're trying to break free from the yoke of God. And the Lord says, ask of me and I'll give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron. Man's rebellious spirit will be broken in the end. You shall break them with a rod of iron.

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Now, therefore, be wise. Oh, you kings.

Oh, you politicians. Oh, you philosophers and thinkers and you people who claim to know it all. Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear. And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son.

Pay homage to him. Lest he be angry. And you perish in the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in him. You know, that day is coming when every rebel will pay homage to the son. When every man will bow before Jesus Christ.

The gospel presents an opportunity for rebels to humble themselves now and to become friends. A rejection of the gospel keeps a man at enmity with God and indeed you will bow one day against your will, but you will bow. And Christ will reign.

He is Lord. Hold on to that. For those of you that haven't yet embraced that, I urge you to do that today.

Embrace Christ as Lord. All of the universe is winding down to him. He is what it's all about.

There's no reality that contradicts him. He is the reality. He is the reality.

Let go of him. Receive him. Follow him.

Ask him to be your savior. Work. Let God work in your life.

Let's pray. Father we thank you for this glorious statement by the apostle Paul concerning your wonderful son Jesus. And Lord it's him that we praise and we worship today.

And Lord, we stand in the midst of this rebellious world, this world that is raging and plotting, and Lord, we lift our hand to God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth, and we praise and worship You today through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, we pray You'd fill us with Your Spirit. We pray, Lord, that You would strengthen our hearts and increase our faith.

Keep us from falling, Lord. We know that there's a great onslaught against us and against Your truth. Help us to stand in the battle and to come through victoriously.

For any among us that have yet to bow the knee to Christ, we pray that they would do so today. And Lord, we think of all those rebellious people that rule over this nation, those blind leaders of the blind, not only this nation but all over the world. Lord, we pray You would humble them and bring them to pay homage to the Son.

In His name we pray. Amen.

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