

# All Things Subject to the Risen Christ

by John Piper

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*The sermon emphasizes the power of the risen Christ to subject all things to himself, and how this power will be used to transform believers' bodies into a body like his glorious body.*

**Duration:** 42:18

**Scripture:** John 10:17

**Topics:** "Christ's Power", "Eternal Triumph"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of the risen Christ to subject all things to Himself. He highlights seven aspects of this power, including its scope, process, pervasiveness, triumph, finality for man, duration, and final base of operation on earth. The preacher encourages the audience to marvel at this power and not to reject Christ. He also reminds them to focus on Jesus rather than being disappointed by the church, as Christ will ensure the triumph of His faithful people. Additionally, the preacher emphasizes that through Christ's power, believers' lowly bodies will be transformed into glorious bodies, and their citizenship is in heaven where Christ reigns.

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## Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from *Desiring God* is available at [www.DesiringGod.org](http://www.DesiringGod.org) If you have a Bible, you may turn to Philippians chapter 3, verse 20 and 21. Let's pray before we read the text.

We cry out, Lord, from the bottom of our hearts on this Easter Sunday morning, help us to see Christ. Help us to savor Christ. Help us to meet Christ.

Help us to marvel at Christ. Come, O God, and make much of your Son now. And may our whole life be a making much of Christ.

May the way we love each other, and the way we love the world, and the way we stand for life, and justice, and truth, and mercy, make much of Christ in this world. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. Philippians 3, verse 20.

Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself. Now these verses assume something stupendous. And we need to make clear what the assumption is so

that we will be able to marvel at what is here.

And that is my goal this morning. My goal is that we would marvel at the One who is spoken of in verses 20 and 21 in Philippians 3. And it's not just my goal for us. It's your goal, I hope, and it's most definitely God's goal.

I know it's God's goal because I read this in 2 Thessalonians 1.10. Christ comes on that day to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. So the aim of history, according to 2 Thessalonians 1, the aim of history and your life is the people of God marveling at Jesus Christ. That's the aim of history.

Everything happens in the universe under God's direction toward that goal. The people of God marveling at Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So something is being assumed here in this text.

And if we don't see it, we won't marvel the way we should. We have to marvel with understanding. And you can't marvel with understanding if you don't know the assumption behind verses 20 and 21.

And the reason marveling with understanding is the only way that God gets any glory is because if somebody tricks you into marveling at their greatness when you're not great, you don't make much of them, you make a fool of yourself. Trickery won't give anybody any glory. There has to be understanding.

If you're going to marvel in a way that brings God and Christ glory, it has to be a marveling with understanding. Absent understanding, marveling honors nobody. So what's the great assumption, the stupendous assumption behind verses 20 and 21? And the assumption is that Jesus is raised from the dead and is alive and is very, very powerful, to put it mildly.

Paul can assume this because he said it and made it explicit in verses 6 to 11 of chapter 2. So if you want to just glance back a page, Philippians chapter 2, verse 11. In these verses, Paul points out the eternal deity of Christ, the incarnation of Christ, the obedient death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the reign of Christ over the universe. In fact, I would say the passage we're about to read in Philippians 2 is the most sweeping, all-comprehending passage you will never read in any literature anywhere a more sweeping, comprehensive, true and glorious passage than this one.

Verse 6 to 11. Though he was in the form of God, let every phrase take your breath away. Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped and held on to, but made himself as nothing.

Taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That is a very amazing passage of Scripture.

He is equal with God. He is God. He became a human being without ceasing to be God, and then he obediently suffered and died.

And the word obediently is very important, because it means somebody had told him to do it. Who was that? God, his Father, told him to do it. Do this, son.

Become a human being, though you have forever existed as my perfectly equal image. Now become a man, live a lowly life of a carpenter, stand forth for three years in complete mercy and meekness and love, and then absorb on the cross all of the damning wrath that I had appointed for all of my people. And then when you have successfully absorbed and borne all the curse and all the wrath that I had intended to give to them, I will raise you from the dead, and they will rise one day with you.

We know that's what the obedience means, because it says in Galatians 3.13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. That's God's law. The curse of the law becoming a curse for us.

He became a substitute for the damnation of all those who would believe in him. That's what the word obedience signifies in Philippians 2. He became obedient even unto death, death on a cross, because his Father had a design, his Father had a plan, and his Father had a command. Go do this, son, because I mean to save people.

And I am just, and I am holy, and I don't sweep sin under the rug of the universe. I punish sin, but I don't want to punish them. And therefore, son, would you bear it for them? That's what the word obedient means.

And that's the great assumption behind chapter 3, verses 20 and 21. Christ came, he obeyed, he bore the wrath, he bore the curse, he bore our judgment, he bore our guilt, he bore our sin. He died, he rose again, and now he reigns.

And we have this description of its implication in verses 20 and 21 of chapter 3. So let's read it again. Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And now we know how he got to heaven.

He got there because God raised him from the dead, and now he's a God-man in heaven. He's not just an ethereal spirit, he's a man, a God-man in heaven who will transform our lowly body, our cancer-ridden body, our addicted body, our depressed body, into a body like his glorious body. And now we know how he got that body, because of the assumption.

He got that body because he obeyed the Father, and he came and he took human flesh on. He never laid it down. Never, never, never does he cease to be the man, Jesus Christ.

He will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself. And now I want us to marvel at this. I want us to marvel at the one being spoken of here.

And I see three reasons to marvel in these two verses. Number one, marvel at the power of the risen Christ to subject all things to himself. Second, marvel that one day this very power by which he subjects all the universe to himself will become employed, making your lowly body like his glorious body.

And marvel, thirdly, that today your citizenship is in heaven where the King is. Let's take those one at a time and marvel. Number one, marvel at the power of the risen Christ to subject all things to himself.

There are two senses in which he has this power. He's God. You don't need any more authority than that to subdue all things to yourself.

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Jesus Christ is God. And therefore he has divine rights, creator rights to subdue all reality under his feet.

However, there is another sense in which he has that power, because what we learn in the New Testament is that God the Father thought it fitting and wise and just and beautiful and good and right, that the one who would reign over humans and reign over all the pain of humans and all the sin of humans should be one of them before he assumes his role as reigning judge over them. There is a fitness in God's mind that the one who will rule should also redeem, that the one who will come as the Lion of Judah before whom people will want to commit suicide rather than face his judgment, that the Lion of Judah will first be the Lamb slain on the cross for the sins of those he's coming to damn if they reject him. It is fitting that one who sits upon the throne of the universe calling the shots heaven or hell will have come among them and said, I will save you, I will save you if you will have me.

It is so fitting that God would do it this way and he did it this way. He doesn't just rule over all things by virtue of his divine creator rights, he rules over all things by virtue of his redeemer purchased rights. He came among us, he bore our sin, he suffered all of our temptations, he took all of our pain, he took all of our shame so that he has not only a creator right to subdue the world, he has a redeemer right, there will be a fitness about it.

Let me read you one verse on this. Listen to Hebrews 2.10. For it was fitting. There's a magnificent word.

I wish I had about 30 minutes to talk about the word fitting. Appropriate, beautiful, well designed, perfectly making sense out of all reality. But we don't have time.

For it was fitting that he for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. That's a heavy verse. That's an awesome verse.

I'll read it again. This is Hebrews 2.10. For it is fitting that he, this is God the father, for whom and from whom all things exist in bringing many of you, many of you, I pray this morning, all of you to glory, should make the founder, that's Jesus, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. The Lord, the Judge, the Savior over the universe was tested.

He didn't just go up there. He was tested. He walked all your paths, suffered all your pain, tested by all of your temptations, and he conquered.

Satan took hold of him, killed him, and he let him do it. Nobody takes my life from me. I lay it down and if I lay it down I can take it again.

He handed his life over to Satan's last weapon. And from the inside blew it to smithereens. So that now when he takes the throne and all the nations are assembled before him, they will see a lion like lamb and a lamb like lion, and they will know they are guilty for having rejected such a Savior.

Don't reject him this morning. So now we have in verse 21, with all of that in mind, the redeemer rights, the creator rights, the purchased rights, the divine rights, with all of that we hear this at the end of verse 21, the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Now I want you to marvel at that power.

And to help you marvel at that power, I want to say seven things about it. One, its scope. Two, its process.

Three, its pervasiveness. Four, its triumph. Five, its finality for man.

Six, its duration. And seven, its final base of operation here on the earth. Listen now as we do these.

Number one, marvel at the scope of Christ's power today. Matthew 28, 18, all authority, all, all. That's a clear word.

All authority in heaven and on earth. Chapter two of Philippians adds under the earth. So now we've got in heaven, on earth, under the earth is mine.

There is no place, no sphere of reality, no dimension of existence which is not under the authority of Jesus Christ. And I would just say in passing here on this first point, if in your life, or as you look at the world, say Terry Shivo or Red Lake or tsunami or cancer of your own body or the condition of your marriage, if you look at this world and you say, it doesn't look like it's under the authority of Jesus, I commend to you a response like the Apostle Paul's rather than like the mocker's. That is, put your hand over your mouth and stand in awe of the mysterious ways of the king of kings.

Remember how Paul said that? Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his ways and how inscrutable his judgments. He didn't say it can't be. Who are you? It is amazing the arrogance of the human mind to dictate to the ruler and creator of the universe that if you rule in wisdom, justice, power and mercy, this cannot be.

It takes your breath away. What will such a person encounter in the last day? The arrogance to tell God, You don't have the wisdom to make that part of your wisdom. Number two, marvel at the process, not just the scope above, on, under the earth, everywhere.

Marvel at the process of Christ's power today. Christ, risen and reigning with all authority, does not use it all to immediately bring all of his enemies to complete subjection. Does he? Does he? No, he doesn't.

He ordains that his kingdom, his rule, will advance on planet earth by the preaching of the gospel and by the sacrificial loving deeds of his people. That's what he has ordained for this age. He says, there will come a time when the time is fulfilled.

Yours is not to know the times and the seasons which the Father has set by his own authority. Yours is to do my will, open your mouth, preach the gospel, love your enemies, and one day when my gospel has spread as far as I ordain it to spread, I will step in and finish this work personally with my power. The process of authority is the explanation of the perplexities of the scope of it.

He does not ordain that he step in now. He ordains that many more people be reached and much more love be performed before he come in glory. Number three, the pervasiveness of Christ's power today.

The largest and the smallest bits of reality are pervaded by his power. Colossians 1.17, he is before all things and in him all things hold together, including this pulpit, this body, this building, those clouds, the sky, the galaxy, the universe, all the molecules, all the atoms, all the subatomic particles hold together by virtue of Christ's authority. If he did not exercise this authority, everything would cease to be, which is not God.

No galaxy, no atom, and no demon would stay in being without the authority of Jesus Christ. Fourth, marvel at the triumph of Christ's power today. The triumph.

It says in 1 Peter 3.22, He has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him. In other words, when he died, he broke the power of Satan, death, hell, all of his enemies. He broke their power from inside.

He broke out of the tomb. He reigns triumphant, triumphant over them. Knowing that ahead of time, he said to Peter in Matthew 16, 18.

I tell you, you are Peter. And on this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Hell cannot defeat Jesus.

He will accomplish all of his purposes for this world and for this ragtag group of sinners called the church. He will accomplish his purposes. If you look around the world in despair at the church, I just got an email this morning, except this language, the headline was, where the hell are the pastors? Concerning Terry Shivo.

If you look around, if you look around the world and see a church that disappoints you, stop looking at the church and look at the Christ. Because he said the gates of hell will not prevail against this church. She will triumph.

I will see to it in due time and I will make a people for myself that are faithful to me. Be a part of that people. Don't bail because you're looking at the church.

Look to Jesus. Number five, marvel at the finality for man in Christ's power today. Finality for you.

John 5, 27, God has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the son of man. Jesus Christ will hold court over you. Every person will give an account before Christ for how they've lived their lives and whether they've trusted in him for the forgiveness of their sins.

And then, to put a real positive hope on it, John 17, 2 says, You, God, have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. Judgment and life are in his hands. Finally, you can't make little of Jesus and have any peace that you're going to go to heaven.

There are hell bound people and there are heaven bound people. And in the end, the judge and the life giver will be Jesus Christ. No one else.

That's why no other religion will suffice. Jesus Christ will decide who goes to hell and who goes to heaven. And the difference won't be your work.

It'll be, did you trust him? Did you fly to him? Did you throw yourself on him for mercy? That's number five. Here's number six. Marvel at the duration of Christ's power.

Revelation 11, 15. The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. The duration is forever.

There is no chapter after Christ. There's no chapter after Christ. Christ is it.

When you meet Christ, that's the end. That chapter lasts forever. His kingdom is forever.

There will be no volume two to human history. It will be over. Everything will be decided in this life.

And then the last chapter, Christ ruling over people, marveling at him, perfectly satisfied forever and ever, will never, ever end. Number seven. Marvel at the final base of operation of Christ's power, namely the earth.

It will be renewed, but it will not be obliterated. It will be a new heaven and a new earth, but not another earth and another heaven, which is why he's coming back here. He's not going to prepare another planet.

When he goes to prepare a place, that's a place that's coming back here. He's bringing it back here. Matthew 2430, then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the son of man coming.

On the clouds of heaven and with power and great glory. Therefore, marvel, marvel that the scope, the process, the pervasiveness, the triumph, the finality and the duration of Christ's power, by which he subjects all things to himself, will have its final base of operations forever and ever and ever here on the earth. That's the first of three focuses for our marveling.

Marvel at the power of the risen Christ to subdue all things to himself. Number two, marvel that one day he will use this power to transform your lowly body into a body like his glorious body. So let's get this down to the individual level here.

Marvel that the power we've just spent all this time talking about will be used to change your mortal body, lowly body into a body like his. Verse 21, first half of the verse, he will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself. He's going to take your husband's decomposing body, your wife's body, your mother's body, if they have believed in Jesus, and raise it from the dead not to be sick anymore or disabled anymore or frail anymore or mentally ill anymore or addicted anymore or weary anymore or tempting or tempted anymore.

Now, let's be careful here. You can make two mistakes. You can over spiritualize this and you can under spiritualize this.

You would under spiritualize this if you thought that you could explain that body that you're going to get the resurrection merely in terms of physical material reality, identical to all the processes that you know now on the earth. That would be an under spiritualizing because it won't be. Identical.

First Corinthians 1544 says it is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. If there was a natural body, there will also be a spiritual body.

In other words, it will be perfectly suited in its materiality to bear the weight of the glory of a perfected soul. This body can't bear it. I have to have a transformed body, which is called a spiritual body.

It can do things, as you know with Jesus, that this body can't do. But be careful now that you don't over spiritualize this. As if you thought, well, we won't eat fish or pizza or we won't be recognized by our friends.

Wrong. It is an amazing thing that just before he went back to heaven, Jesus appeared to his disciples repeatedly. You know what his main goal was? I'm real.

Touch me. And they didn't believe it. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

And a lot of people interpret the resurrection that way. It wasn't really a bodily resurrection. It was just kind of an appearance.

You have visions. You can hallucinate. That's the way he appeared.

He's kind of a spiritual reality in the world today. Liberals all over the world talk about the resurrection that way. Jesus labored to put that to death.

Let me just read you one thing that he said. This is Luke 24:39. See my hands, my feet.

It is I myself. Touch me. See for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still disbelieve, these were not gullible guys. I mean, don't write these guys off.

They had to be persuaded. They weren't gullible. While they were still disbelieving for joy and were marveling, he said to them, Have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish.

And he took it and ate it before them. Why? He wasn't hungry. In order to signify, When I come, I'm coming to the earth.

And I'm going to make this earth and all the fishes in the sea and all the birds in the sky and the lamb and the lion new. And everything you thought you were going to lose when you died, you're going to get back a hundredfold, including your favorite dish. It's just so real.

It's so real. Don't make Christianity into this loosey-goosey spiritual thing that after you die, you go somewhere in some spiritual way and that's the end of that. Don't buy that.

This is not Plato. This is Jesus Christ, made the world, loves the world, didn't create it to be destroyed, created it to be regenerated and made new, came down, took it on divinity, died to redeem it, went back, will come, finish the work of salvation. Marvel that your bodies are important.

And he will make them glorious. In fact, it says in one of the parables in Matthew 13, we will shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father. You think there's any ugly people in the world? If they're a Christian, they won't be long.

They won't be long. Last, last point, number three. We marvel at his power.

We marvel that that power is going to be used to make us in our bodies like his glorious body. And now finally, we marvel that today our citizenship is in heaven. I hope it is in heaven for you.

Verse 20. Our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're a believer this morning in Jesus Christ, you don't have to wait for the second coming of Christ when he sets up his throne and puts everybody in front of him to divide them into two groups.

You don't have to wait to know which group you'll be in. There's some religions that teach you have to wait. You never can know.

You never can be sure. Where's my citizenship? Hell or heaven? Well, you won't know until he comes. Well, you can know.

The Bible is so clear on this. Our citizenship is in heaven. There's a list.

There's a list of citizens. And when you believe in Jesus, there's a seal stamped on that. Blood is written over that.

It'll never be taken away. You can know today that your citizenship is in heaven, not because you are going to live there forever. There's a notion that you go to heaven and that's where you are forever.

Wrong. The reason it matters that our citizenship is in heaven is because that's where Christ is. And I'll tell you, when the king and the ruler of that colony comes down here, your citizenship comes with him.

He's not on the earth and you're up there in heaven. When he comes, he brings the list with him. And if you've gone to heaven, you're coming back with him on the clouds of heaven.

And then you will join with those who have been raised from the dead when he comes. And forever we will be with the Lord on planet earth. So, question.

Closing question. Is your citizenship in heaven? Let me ask a few more questions that I think will help you grasp the answer to that and know how to change the answer if it's, I'm not sure, or I don't know, or no. Have you laid down, or are you willing right now, in your heart, to lay down the arms of unbelief and rebellion against the king of kings? All of us are born rebels.

We're going to do our own thing, be our own thing, be our own master, go our own way, and we will. We'll go our own way, straight to hell. But then Jesus comes, he dies, he rises, he extends his hands, like I am this morning, and says, I have an amnesty.

I have an amnesty. Do you know the word amnesty? When there have been a lot of rebels in a kingdom, and the ruler who they were rebelling against finally has decisive power, and he knows he can squash them all, and instead he doesn't want to squash them all, and he writes a bill of amnesty, it's got conditions, and the conditions of this one are, believe me, trust me, stop rebelling against me, lay down the arms of your self-exaltation, and come to me, throw yourself on my mercy, I will have you, I don't care what you've done against me, or against other people. My amnesty is written and signed in blood, the blood of my Son.

I will honor everyone who comes to my Son. That's the amnesty. And so my question is, having heard of the power of the Lord, because of his resurrection and his creator rights, and having seen that he's going to use that power to make our bodies like his glorious body on a new heaven and a new earth, and that you can know that today your citizenship is with him in heaven and will one day be in that role on the earth, don't you want to stop rebelling and accept the amnesty, and then when we sing in just a moment, I will glory in my Redeemer, my Redeemer, my Redeemer, mean it? If you said those words in about 60 seconds, if you said those words and meant it, your name would be written there.

Your citizenship would be in heaven. All the power and all the promises that I've just spoken of would be yours. It's that simple.

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