

Colossians 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the centrality of Christ and the need to focus on the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:03:48

Scripture: John 1:10, Romans 14:11, Colossians 1:12-20, Hebrews 1:2-3, Revelation 1:8

Topics: "Colossians", "The Preeminence of Christ", "Redemption and Reconciliation"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the centrality of Christ in all aspects of life and history, as illustrated in Colossians 1. He highlights that everything was created by Him and for Him, and that true redemption and reconciliation come through His blood. Ravenhill critiques the modern world's reliance on knowledge and power, contrasting it with the eternal significance of Christ's sacrifice and His role as the head of the church. He urges believers to recognize that Christianity is fundamentally about a personal relationship with Christ, who is the source of hope and glory. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of Christ's majesty and the importance of making Him the center of our lives.

Transcript

Colossians 1 reading from verse 12, giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us, and you can put yourself in there, I am doing that, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence, for it pleased the Father that in him should all grow, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, to him to reconcile all things unto himself by him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven, and you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblemished and unrepugnant in his sight. If you caught the drift of this reading I think it's this, that everything centers in him, all things are by him and for him and in him and through him. I was thinking today and yesterday about the way that men have divided up history, I'm not too great at memorizing it or anything else, but I do know there are main divisions in the history of men or even before men as they say, for instance you get men talking about the ice age and the stone age and the iron age,

and they're trying to label this age in which we live as the atomic age, and it seems to me when I think of the expansion of scientific know-how in the last hundred years that man's, his head has been getting broader and his heart has been getting narrower.

He understands a lot more than he ever understood, it's estimated now there are more scientists in the world at this given moment than there have been from this moment back to the dawn of creation, and a boy with a good IQ, say a Rhodes scholar or something like that or a fellow maybe at Harvard, one of the best boys, not the worst, possibly has more knowledge of science than some scientists, some of the leading scientists had in the world a couple hundred years ago because we've invaded so many areas and passed on that knowledge that the average Joe if you like, not this Joe, but the other Joes, they could sit down and answer so many questions that are fantastic, and it's dreadful when you think of it, we've come to the place now where it's possible without any supernatural power, just devilish power of men, it's possible to eliminate the whole human race by germ warfare and atomic warfare and hydrogen bombs and other devilish things, it is possible, it's estimated now that science has enough know-how, it has enough power to exterminate the whole human race if we, if everything exploded at once and you know we had a head-on crash with Russia and everything else pops goes the weasel. Now that's what they say, we know it won't be that, it won't be that way, the world is not going to end either with a whimper or with a bang, it's going to end with Jesus Christ on the throne. If we keep that clear in our minds, that's going to help us an awful lot, I think in the days that are coming up.

But as I thought about this, the different ways that we have divided history and yet history is actually only divided by one thing, do you know what it's divided by? It's divided by a manger, isn't it? Now aren't you sure? Well it wasn't, it was a manger, all right, that's what divides history. I don't, I look at the stars, in our new house I ask them to do one thing, mother doesn't like these things but I get them to shoot some of that glittery stuff, you know, when the ceiling is softened, shoot it up like that and I can put a light there and just look up and sit back and ignore the light in my room and I can get into eternity pretty quick, there's an easy guard space. I think of the difference, the nearest star is I don't know how many millions of miles away and I like to look at immensity, I like to think of vastness, I don't know how far apart the stars are but I don't know what they're divided by, they're divided by space, just as time is divided by a manger and races are divided by colour, religious groups are divided by theology, we're divided socially by wealth, everything has its given point of division but it's interesting that when we suddenly got this horrible power by which we can't liquidate, we can certainly move some countries if we wanted to but nobody suggests changing the calendar.

The calendar was changed by Jesus Christ, the son of God. God wanted it that way, it is that way and it always will be that way. The world is going to end up in judgment sure enough but all the spoils are going to the one that was on Calvary, he's going to get all the spoils, the devil's going to get all the garbage and he's welcome to it, go to hell with it, you're going to stay there with it.

But the spoils belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. I used to have a set, I'm sorry I sold them but you know when I was poor, which I'm not now, but when I was poor I had books and I sold them because I needed the money, I'd like to get them back. They were a whole, I think almost complete set of Wesley's works, you can get a complete set of Wesley's works, you can get a complete set of Wesley's letters, you can get a lot of things if you write to the Methodist down in London, they're interesting.

But this set me thinking, reading this you see Christ is the centre and the circumference, this book actually is only about Jesus Christ, that's all it's about, whether it's typology or whatever, the centre and the

circumference, the light and the life of the gospel that we, now you can kick Buddha out of Buddhism and still have Buddhism, you can get rid of whispery old Confucius and still have Confucianism because it's a philosophy, I'm not referring to you, but you can have these philosophies without the particular philosopher, but you cannot have Christianity without Christ, Christianity is Christ.

All right, now Wesley says I went to Wednesbury, Wednesbury is a town outside of Birmingham in England and he says I went to Wednesbury and I offered men Christ, you know I like that, it kind of rings my bell, he didn't offer them forgiveness, they needed it, they were the lousiest people on earth, you know it's an amazing thing that John Wesley was such a brilliant scholar, he learned languages, he said just to keep his brain from going rusty, mine got rusty if I tried to learn them, but to keep his brain polished and he could recite things in Latin, he loved French, he translated Madame Bourdinot's wonderful hymns out of the French and I don't know how many languages he read, Greek and what not, and it's amazing that God took this man from the family nearest the royal family in England

and he took him down to the gutters, he took him down to the miners, he used to preach them at five o'clock in the morning, most of our darling preachers are just going to bed after watching Donny Carstner, he was up and on the streets and he preached Christ and he said the tears as they came out of the coal mine at five o'clock, they listened and the tears washed tracks down their faces, you could see their white skins as they wept over their sin, I don't think anybody loves sinners enough to do that anymore these days, you do it by radio, you get a lot of slick girls swinging their hips, I think this is going to happen to you today, oh that's right, I think you're going to evangelize the world, it's very different from a man with a heart on fire, passionate and pouring his spirit out,

but he says I offered men Christ, now they needed forgiveness, they needed to know there was heaven but he didn't offer them forgiveness of sins, he didn't offer them pardon, I offered them Christ he said, you see we don't, we offer people forgiveness, do you want to be forgiven, come down, weep on my shoulder and get baptized the night you're through, you've got it made, do you want to go to heaven, well this is the way to go, you know, you want to get rid of your guilty past, I'm going to catch up with you, you're a smart guy, you get rid of your lousy sins, even the cops could get you, but you tell us all about it, that who wants to be displaced by self going out of his life and Christ coming in, all the garbage goes out when he comes in, because you won't come into the garbage, it

doesn't go out, you can mentally accept him, you can say yes I believe he died on the cross, so what, I believe in the bank down the street, I've got nothing in it, I believe in lots of things that don't help me, but you see he got men and women to not again to come forward, because they needed peace, or they needed joy, or they needed forgiveness, or they needed to know they were going to have, and he says I went there and I boldly offered men Christ, now he did that because he says my heart, one of his favorite hymns, Charles wrote the hymns you know, his brother made the theology, and Charles Wesley I think set his brother's theology to music, some of those hymns are just fantastic, they're profound, but the reason John offered men Christ was because he had found Christ, he hadn't just

found peace, he hadn't found, he found Christ, he found a person, he had become the habitation, the indwelling of a living presence, as vast as it is, and to me it's always astounding that just as the Holy Ghost came on the matrix of the Virgin and conceived Jesus Christ in her, that miracle takes place in every man and woman who's really born again, Christ is born in you by the Holy Spirit, he's not just going to see him face to face, he lives in you, if he doesn't you're not saved, you may be good, you may be a model, you may have changed your life, you may have altered your life standard, you don't run the clubs, you don't do

this or that, I've seen many a drunkard say look I'm not going to go to hell, I'm wrecking my home, I remember one man particularly in our neighborhood that was a

terror, he fought everybody including his wife and I took some courage, but he found out when he was drunk of course, and he was a terror, and one day he just came in our meeting and he said you know I'm a fool to live like this, and from that day he put his big pipe on one side and he put his liquor on one side and instead of dressing in rags he became a nice polite gentleman, I don't believe he ever got really born again, he did a mental somersault, he realized a lot of lousy rotten things were in his life, I can put them out by my own power, so he did, but an entirely different thing happens when as I say that the fact is presented to men and women that Jesus Christ can come in and live in you, that's what Paul says, Christ in you the hope of glory, if he isn't in you, you've no hope

of glory, you fool yourself, I fool myself, so again he went and he says, he gets Charles singing, my heart is full of Christ and longs this glorious message to declare, now I don't doubt he had peace, he certainly had, I don't doubt that he had been reconciled to God, but that wasn't the burning thing, he wanted and he knew this, that if you just get people to come and accept the philosophy, you can argue, if I can argue you into Christianity, somebody can argue out of it tomorrow, but if Christ comes in glory, they'll never argue Christ out of you, again Christ did not come, and I always liked that, I remember a dear old dead preacher years ago, R.

R.

Brown, that Christ did not come into the world to make bad men good, he came into the world to make dead men live, that in us there is a cell, it doesn't matter how intellectually the sparks may fly off you, you may be a genius, you may get grade A's and pluses and all the rest, you may be smart in business or anywhere else, but if Christ does not live in us, then we're bankrupt, we're still dead in trespasses and in sins, now the whole theme that we have in here is that what Paul is doing here is focusing their attention on the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, I don't know, sometimes I'd like to go to a conference where they don't preach doctrine, somebody just spends a whole week exalting Christ, wouldn't that be great, you know every time they're coming in, they're not going to argue

about terms, they're not going to argue about eternal security, they're not going to argue about premillennialism, of course, they're just going to present Jesus Christ in all his majesty and all his glory, it would do us all a world of good just to sit for a whole week bathing in the presence of the majesty of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and if I get the hell in here, the drift of what Paul is saying, well this is what it's all about, he talks of this Christ in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, down in verse 18 he says not only is he the firstborn of every creature, but he's the firstborn from the dead, you know in the classification of Jesus Christ in the book of the revelation,

this is mentioned, I'm not going to lay the point, but three times over this is mentioned, the first chapter verses 7 through 8 through to 11 and in the 21st chapter in the 22nd chapter, God has given Jesus Christ a supreme place, he says he is the alpha and the omega, as you know those are the Greek letter, first letter in the Greek last word in the Greek alphabet, he is the alpha and the omega, and not only that, he's everything in between too, he is the beginning and the end, but not just the way this is presented, I am alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end saith the Lord, now look which is, oh no no wait a minute you've got that wrong Lord, you're risen from the dead, you should say which was and which is, no no no

no over and over again, it doesn't say which is and which

was, which was and which is, that would be our order, well he's the Christ who was, he died and was again, and he's the Christ who is, he's there with the father, and he's the Christ who's going to come, he doesn't say that, he says he is the Christ or he's alpha and omega, the beginning and the end saith the Lord, which is and which was, you see God lives in the eternal present, there's no past and present with God, there's no history and history and prophecy or history and future with God, he lives in the eternal now, and Jesus Christ was eternally the same, if I'd been writing this I'd say I want to tell you about Jesus, you know the Jesus that was, he used to walk on the floor and touch people and now he is, and then he's coming but Jesus takes the place, he says listen I am, he is,

he is, he ever is, he used to sing a beautiful hymn years back when I was a youngster, he ever lives above for me to intercede, okay well then in the next verse, verse 16 for by him, you know this is one of the most immense verses in the I wish to goodness we knew Colossians 1.16 like we know John 3.16 because this shows you how vast the Lord Jesus is, it's such a comprehensive statement, for by him were all things created that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible, invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him, which is wonderful but they're created for him as well, every island God put in the ocean, every grain of sand in the earth, everything was created by him, visible, everything you see flying there, every animal you

see, things you don't see unless you go down in the bathyscope and you go down with this fellow, this Frenchman, Cousteau, Cousteau, yeah Cousteau and go down there and see that world which to us is an invisible world, the glory that we've, you couldn't even comprehend it, I mean it would be like trying to look at the sun with your natural eyes, you'd lose your eyesight and if we tried to look at those things which God has hidden from us, well there's no way in which you could take it, now look at John chapter 1, you know this well enough but it's always good to do a little brushing up and remind ourselves of it because you might want to look at it some other time, verse 10, he was in the world, the world was made by him and the world knew it not, well that's dumb isn't it, they see a man

come down the street and somebody says you know what I'm kind of thinking this man might, the man that Isaiah spoke about that he made the world, come on you fool, you know all he does, he makes bits of stuff that go around the necks of animals, he makes yolks for animals and he makes caskets for dead people, he never made the world, he came to his own and his own received him not, I'm going to suggest to you this evening if you like, you'd be wrong if you do but I suggest the Lord tried to get in some churches this morning and they didn't even know he was coming so they quit and went on, let the choir sing and said a load of rubbish and that, he came to his own and his own received him not, he couldn't still find no place in the end, that the world was made by him and the world knew him

not, again uh look at Hebrews, this is another fabulous verse, Hebrews 1 3, oh let's start with this one, God who at sundry times, different times and in divers manners, somebody asked the killer boy what that meant, he says well divers, you know what divers are, he says I've got divers in my church, he says you have, he says yeah, he says I told you, some dives out of that door and sometimes and I thought on something else and somebody dives out of the other one, that actually it means diverse or different, God wrote so many times and in many different ways, spake in the time past unto the fathers by the prophets, having these last days spoken unto us by his son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, you know that'll make something run up and down your back, I mean he is the heir of

all things, he looks as though he's out of the picture now, they're not going to consider Jesus Christ tomorrow in United Nations or anybody else, Kissinger doesn't think he's going to meet Jesus at the end of the road, he thinks he settles it all by whistling to the Arabs and selling the Jews and get a marriage to give the Panama Canal away and we will also pay for the repairs and all the other insane things he has, the preacher told me last week up in the north, he said I wrote to Mr Ford and told him I've been a republican all my life and said until this year and I'm not voting for you the republicans next year, not for you for number one reason, you've got Kissinger in there, number two your wife, in essence he said he's supporting immorality and he said you're out of the picture,

you're out of the picture, this stupid world, the last thing the world thinks of now, these boys we saw the pictures you go and got to come and talk about the pictures hanging up, the last thing these men realise is that one day they're going to have to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, that this world belongs to God, the old usurper has gotten in and he's fouled it up and he's got people to believe that the material world in which they live is all that there is, when you've had it done with anyhow, nobody ever came back to tell us, nor did the blarney, you and I have got a preview, you know there is a sense in which, now I know we're human with emotions, with feelings, with nerves, with all the other things but there is a sense in which God has told us so much that you ought to be a

headache to the devil, you ought to be able to say I can't get that man down, I can't get the woman to mistrust, I don't know why they won't but yes I do know why, because they read this book and believe God means what he says and after all I guess that's a simple definition of faith, I believe God when he says it, often I meet preachers who say to me, I read your book, boy one thing stuck in my throat like a ticking bomb, what was that? well you said that somebody one day will read the bible and believe it and we'll all be embarrassed, I say well have you any other explanation? well no that's the thing I don't get over, I don't know what's going to happen but you know somebody one day will read the bible and believe it, I say to people sometimes I haven't much faith but I've so much

faith in you and you give me a check for a thousand dollars, I run to your bank with it tomorrow, I've so much faith in you, you want to try it?

John took his head before it got finished, no no but I've enough faith in you to believe it, if you gave me a check you wouldn't give me a check that were pounds, well would God give me a check that were pounds? after all that's what Sturgeon said, the bible is God's checkbook, the checks are already signed in the blood of Christ, all you do is fill in by faith, not just what you want but what you really need and my God should supply all your need out of his riches and I don't think that means visibly, it may do, that may be in the periphery but again if it's just merely materialism which it isn't, what's God doing for his children in Russia and China and elsewhere today, you see I had to talk to somebody today long distance, one of the most gorgeous families we know and they're in

serious financial trouble, they've four beautiful children and they just adopted two little boys that were deserted by a Japanese mother, she married a GI, I think she was a backslider at the time but she came to this country and then his family totally rejected her, she put up with it as long as she could and she said well it's not good for them and me and this Christian family that we know so well adopted the two children, they had a large house in a very beautiful costly house and the fellow's been fighting off certain problems, he's in construction and he told me he said I can make 15,000 a day when business is wrong and I lose 4,000 a day when it isn't, well it's rained for 40 days and 40 nights, where he is, just about, they've been losing, losing 4,000 a day, machinery doing

nothing, doing nothing, he's bankrupt, now what are they going to do, to get out of the house, bad enough he's got four children, now there's six, bad enough he's got a good income, he's got no job, she is one of the most gorgeous women I think isn't it she, we've ever met Martha, beautiful sweet American lady, just full of charm and grace apart from the grace of God, she's one of those natural ladylike people you know and with the grace of God they're very wonderful and it's a crushing blow, it's something you don't understand, all I could get each time I prayed for them was when he has tried me I shall come forth as gold, but you know with all the good intentions you have sometimes you can give advice which in adversity becomes adverse nearly, the last thing people wanted advice, ten

dollars worth of helps worth a hundred dollars worth of philosophy and when you get right down to situations like this it's a very different thing, when God pulls the rug you find out where you are you see, she was as sweet as any other on this one, I could have cried, I was choking when I was trying to talk to her, oh well God will see us through, we've we've known God in prosperity and even luxury, now we'll prove him in poverty, I don't know which way to turn, what way out this, so what, well again I can give advice but I'm not in that situation, Mr Shakespeare said it's always easier to bear the other guy's toothache, you ever think that John, you got toothache, oh I'm sorry if I'm not happy, well is everything in the house, what is God after again in our life, I've tried to leave

this, I hope I can leave it in your mind that God is more concerned with what you are than who you are, he's more concerned with your character than your charisma, he's more concerned with you, with that thing which is going to last in you a million years from this afternoon, you won't have a dime in anyhow, you'll be in one of two places and I don't think we have any social distinctions in heaven, of course there'll be distinctions of reward which will come to next week, but by the same in the presence of the King, if the young Prince of Wales as we have it now, Prince Charles gets married and you read all the papers, you think 5,000 women are chasing him, is that Pied Piper or Hamlet or something, but if he does and I get invited to the wedding, I won't care if I'm the last seat of the

throne, if I get into the wedding of the Prince, man I would be thrilled, I wouldn't but I'm speaking as a social thing, I don't care whether I go or not, but that same estimate that people have, oh if I ever went to a banquet, you know, if I ever went to the White House, you know, and you know, if I could even find a hamburger, somebody dropped from the White House, they'd almost take it home and wrap it in paper and put a glass case on it, that's our silly estimate, but the least in the Kingdom of God, let's get this clear in our minds, the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than the greatest sinner in the world, they may be the greatest athlete, they may be the greatest financial wizard, they may be the greatest painter, they may be the greatest scientist, and God looks down and

says, but listen, you know that man there, Paul Getty, that's worth, how many is he worth, a thousand and two million dollars, I don't have any stake in him, I don't want to die in him, looks down and says, there's Frankie, got past his first five million yet, but I love him more than ever, I love any of these other guys, why?

Because I have something in him, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son worked in him, and therefore God has an investment in me, and God has a delight in me, and God has a delight in you what? Because there came a day when the barriers went down, and Christ came in, and sin went out, and we're not yet what we want to be, but thank God we're not what used to be either, there's a long way to go, but boy we've come a long way since he lifted us out of a horrible pit, and it's a good thing to remember we were bondsmen, and it won't get you into bondage to think of that, if you realize again that all the grace that God has is at your

disposal, but here God says in these last days, and remember he wrote this two thousand years ago, so we must be in the last seconds, Hebrews 1 and 2, have in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed to be heir of all things, by whom also he made the world, boy he wrote that in again and again, John writes it, this man writes it, Paul if you like, Paul writes it, he made the world, and the world was made by him, and the world was made for him, all right, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, hey we don't think that do we?

We say boy what's going to happen if God withdraws? I'll tell you what, you know you can have a revival of gold, but if God withdraws his mercy from America, we'll be in hell tomorrow, if God cut his grace off from you, you couldn't stand two minutes, he upholds all things, the very stars in their courses forth, you know when God wanted to pull a trick on somebody, turn the stars around, ever read that?

The cars on the way, stars in their courses forth against Cicero, when he wanted to foul up an attack, he changed the stars, maybe he changed them back an hour after, but he fooled him, and he was reading the stars, he said I'll go this way, I'll do this, I'll do the other, and the stars in their courses forth against Cicero, he upholds all things by the word of his power, sometimes when you're out east, you'll see a sphere on the back of an elephant, it's supposed to be the world, it's done pretty crudely, some of these times it's carved in ivory, but there it is a sphere of the world on the back of an elephant, the elephant stands on a huge tortoise, because the elephant is there for strength, and the tortoise has a hide, if you want to call it a shell, that you can hardly break, so this is how the world is held up, the world is held up by an elephant who stands on the tortoise, but you ask them what the tortoise stands on, they don't know, well he can't stand on nothing, but God hangs the world upon nothing, he sustains all things by the word of his power, we were talking about the fact now, we've got these watches, something gave me this one, well when I was a boy, you had the big watches like this, men used to walk with one shoulder up, watch putting them down, these enormous watches, you pull it up, you wind it up, my father would say wind my watch up Lucy before you come to bed, my mother would say oh the old watch we wind up, well you couldn't keep it adjusted, I mean when the spring is tight like that, it's fighting to get release, when it's slowed down it was losing time, they were hard to adjust, we got rid of the spring watches, we got watches with batteries, then we got watches which automatically wound themselves as you moved your arm, then we've got out of that, we've got quartz watches, quartz watches are going out, they've got a solar watch already, it's amazing what scientific know-how we have, it's amazing how man has developed his inhumanity and you know that the higher he gets, if he stands 12 feet tall intellectually today, he doesn't stand 12 inches tall morally and spiritually, he's out, he's down, we're in a rotting civilization and only the mercy of God, you see men say well I don't mind, well I go to church, all you've got is the 12 commandments, if you told the oceans to stand up until they were 30,000 feet high and suddenly close the east and west, the pacific and atlantic ocean of an American, they'd do it, he opposes all things by the word of his power and all things he's created, the father has created everything for the joy of his son Jesus Christ, why?

Because Jesus was going to do what nobody else could do, he is the first and the last, you mean well he was the first, he was the first in the beginning, somewhere, well he was there all right because he says that in John 17 doesn't he? I was with the father before the world was, I want to get back, I don't like this rotten world, it smells, it's evil, it's full of hostility and I miss coming to my father and I've been commuting day by day and for that reason as Wesley says he laid his glory by and wrapped him in our clay, why?

To redeem us men, he came for us men and for our salvation but he was there in the beginning, he was there before the beginning, he was there before, the bible is very beautiful isn't it, he talks about the trees

of the field clapping their hands, wouldn't that be great to see them clapping their hands, you know when all of life is over, when we get into eternity and it's going to be there and we sing the hallelujah chorus with a hundred million, hundred million plus and the trees all start clapping their hands, that's what it says, the trees of the field clap their hands and the birds, the morning stars sang together, my my we think we've got some stars in Hollywood, they're mud stars, they're nothing, they'll be in hell when these other stars are singing.

Now that's all created for the joy of his son Jesus Christ who is not only the firstborn amongst many brethren, he's the firstborn in everything, he's the firstborn from the dead, he's the alpha in everything, he was before there was a man who could breathe, he was before there was a bird could sing, he was before there was a blade of grass on the earth, he was before God tossed the stars into the silver socket, he was, he was before there was an angel, he was before there was an archangel and when you're finished with all the rotten history, you see it says, I mean the other script you were reading there, let's look back at that for a moment, Colossians, Colossians, Colossians, 1:16 for by him were all things created that are in heaven, see for all the stars there, he put the paving

blocks down for a solid gold one and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, thrones, thrones, man alive, do you know that God made every throne so that every king could one day bow to Jesus, isn't that what it says in Romans 2, 14 somewhere, one day every knee should bow, every throne, those thrones, they were, they were made only that they might have a temporary kingdom and one day they're all going to cast their crowns before him, oh there's a story goes back to, I don't know if it is somewhere in history but it's also said of Queen Victoria who is I suppose our most godly queen that they played Handel's Messiah and they came to the Hallelujah Chorus and they said well it's customary for everybody to stand but your majesty please be seated, she said be

seated, if he walked in here I'd throw my crown at his feet right now she said and she stood and so ever since in England, I don't know you know in America but in England when he comes to the Hallelujah Chorus the conductor just gives you the signal, everybody stands and I think well you poor dumb folk, you're like the people that print our Bibles and never read them, build our churches, never go to them, print our hymn books, never sing our songs, I know about heaven and you'll not make it, you'll sing the Hallelujah Chorus and you'll be in a place where there's no singing, there's only sighing and sobbing and horror and terror, but all things were created for him and all thrones, the child of Persia right now, he's one of the wealthiest men in the whole world, he certainly has the

greatest army in the Middle East that he bought from this country, airplanes and I don't know what in the world he doesn't have but he has a throne, I think it's called a peacock throne, did you remember that about four years ago they had a celebration there celebrating his what 2500th year and so Barbara Walters went because there's no room for anybody so Barbara Walters went and she went and what did they have, they had birds tongues and they had all the delicacies and they showed the palaver, 2000 years this throne has been occupied old Haile Selassie died the other week, he was 80 some years of age, he was his grandfather's grandfather's grandpa, so they claim the illegitimate offspring of the Queen of Sheba came back with child from Solomon, that's why he claims he's the king of

kings and lord of lords and I don't know, I'd like to go to Ethiopia but I understand that the Ark of the Covenant is still there, it's in a temple there and the Jews have tried to get it and they won't sell it, that this is again why they claim that they're distinct line right back to the Old Testament days, they have this model that I think until last year wasn't even allowed to be photographed and I read a statement that the Jews

He could say blessed king, he's my king maybe, oh yeah, yeah, he's his king, he has to do as he's told, but he has no assurance because he didn't need to be saved. When they started causing a rough house and getting mad, the Lord kicked half of them, the third of them into hell, and said the others aren't going to have a chance about it anyhow, he stopped them having that free will as I see it. But apart from that, the things that are visible, the things that are invisible, they were made by him, and they were made for him.

Hmm, isn't that beautiful? Whether they be thrones, well that's a lot, or a bit more, dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, for he is before all things, it's the same thing again, not he was, he is, he is, you see, it doesn't sound like our language, he is before all things. And by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body of the church who is the first beginning, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead. That in all things he might have pre-eminence.

You know, I think, I think that's the, to me, that's the kind of, what would you call it, actual pivot on which all the apostles, life, philosophy, teaching, preaching, writing, exist. One thing of it, that he might have the pre-eminence, that he might have the pre-eminence. Paul, if you take the epistles of the Hebrews, and believe he wrote it, most of us do some doubt, but if you take those 14 epistles, and you build them up like a pyramid, like that, you know, and then you've got a point like that, and he turns it all over, and he balances the pyramid on its prime point, and he says, well of course, the whole of Christianity, it's, it hangs on one thing.

You say, well Jesus died first, well he doesn't say that. Well, are we saved by his blood? No, what are we saved by? We're saved by his life. The blood is only one half of the coin.

He could shed his blood and die on the cross, but if he didn't rise from the dead, we're finished. We're certain. The unique thing about the gospel, this is why, again, you can't divorce Jesus from Christianity.

Buddha, yes, you can kick him out of Buddhism and you still have it, it's a philosophy. Confucianism, yes, but not Christianity. He is the centre and the sub.

He is the sum and the substance, the centre and the circumference, the light and the life of Christianity. He is the alpha, he is the omega, he is the beginning, he is the end. And, to go a little further, I won't keep it too long tonight, because I'm going to take it out of you next week, so, let me be merciful.

Verse 19, It pleased the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell. Isn't that something? It pleased the Father that in him, the Lord Jesus Christ, should all the fullness dwell. Now, across the page, it may not be that way in your Bible, but down in the same chapter, pardon me, in the second chapter and verse 9, In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And I would say to you, with all the power that I have, whoever you hear, not only be suspicious, but ignore all the teachers and all the teaching that diminishes in any way the majesty of Jesus Christ. Whether it's in the incarnation, or his redemption, or his physical resurrection, or his coming. Surely it was before there was a spiral of the... And you know what? When they put up the last tombstone, and the last old crow has rubbed his beak on it, and sung a requiem, Jesus Christ will be there at the end.

Whatever the testimony is of the apostles, and it's wonderful, remember that the final word is with Jesus always. And in the revelation, what does he say? I think it's a superb thing. I can see him standing right at the end of time, you know, when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done.

When there's no more Napoleons, or Caesars, or stupid Henry Kissingers, or American or British government, Wall Street, or Dow Jones, or anything. Right at the end of the line, when every island has been moved out of its place, when God has pulled down the blinds and blown out the light, and right at the end of the line, at the end of the road, I see somebody standing there, and he has his hand raised, and he says, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am the life forevermore, and I have the keys of death and hell. He's the alpha, and he's the omega.

He's the first, and he's the last. He's the beginning, and he's the ending. He is, and he was, and he is to come.

In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, to reconcile all things unto himself. By him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. You see, all he's doing is hitting the nail on the head again.

He's hit it once, and he says, I'm going to knock that nail in again in case it slips. And he says, having made peace through the blood of his cross, verse 20. By him to reconcile all things unto himself.

By him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight. Again, God's business is not to save you from hell.

That's a fringe benefit. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is not to save us from eternal punishment. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is to make us holy.

To make us holy. To make us pure in heart. To make us the indwelling place of God himself by his spirit.

That's what he said. I didn't write this, you know. You were alienated.

Well, that strikes home, doesn't it? Full of wicked works. Well, you're the same people that are mentioned in verse 13. Who have delivered us from the power of darkness.

And now we're in the kingdom of his own dear son. There's a little book at the end here. Have you ever read it? Right before the big, big book called the book of revelations.

There's a little book called the epistle of Jude. It's a great, it's a great little epistle. Actually, not it is.

It really is an epitome of the whole Bible. Particularly the Old Testament. The whole Bible really is condensed in this.

You read it and see how much there is in it. But let's just finish with the verse 24, 25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

So the only wise God, our savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. Isn't that great? You ever go anywhere and somebody says, you know, you've sat around a banquet and somebody's sung or a wedding or something and somebody says, well, we'll have to go. Yeah, we've been here four hours but all good things come to an end.

Well, forget it, they don't. No. Because this little thing hasn't even begun yet.

We haven't even dreamed of the glory that shall be when we get there. I have not seen nor heard neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him. But he has revealed them to us.

You see, people stop there saying we've never gone, we don't know, you can't understand. Well, that's not what God said. But he's given us a preview.

How? Like the telescope of faith Isaiah had when he wrote Isaiah 53. Like Moses had somewhere when he looked down the avenue of time and it said Moses chose what to suffer because he wanted to be with a bunch that served Christ. And you and I have a preview in this.

The Savior that I serve, all the creation, things visible are invisible. The things present are things to come. All the history in the past, all the millions that have died, all that will live.

The birds in the air, the fish in the sea, everything. That's what he says in Revelation we find next week. He says everything in the air and under the sea and on the land.

Angels, principalities, they're all one day going to join in the most fantastic song that's ever been sung. And it says here that this glory and majesty and dominion and power is now so you may get your share tomorrow if you need a special load. Just say Lord I'm switching on for a little more power.

I need it today, a little more grace, a little more strength. But he says it's not only now, it's forever. It's forever.

Isn't that great? It's never going to run out. I suppose it's good for us anyhow Now the only, oh I don't know how often it is. How often is it a man wants to conquer the world? How many men conquered the world? Alexander the Great when he was 27 sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Napoleon got pretty near to him. Napoleon, if I remember it, where was he born? He was born on the island of St Helena. He was born on one island, died on another.

St Helena I think he was born and he died on Elbe. If I remember right or vice versa. And he was standing one day after he'd been defeated on the 18th of June 1815.

And he'd been defeated by Wellington at Waterloo. And he was born on this island and one day he was standing pensively. He often stood with his hand in his coat.

You know that's his favourite posture. And he was standing there and he was shaking his head and angry. And Prince Talleyrand, one of his chief men, advisors, came up to him.

Made some comment how miserable he was. No longer did men salute him and pay him homage and do all the rest of it to him. And they said Napoleon turned round with a snarl.

And in essence he said to him, Talleyrand what have you lost? What have you lost? I had an empire, he said, and I stand its ashes around my feet. And I don't know a man today that would draw a sword on behalf of Napoleon. And he said as I reflect I know this.

There are people in the world, there are thousands of them, maybe billions of them. That would die for Jesus Christ today but nobody would die for me. Because my empire is gone.

And the good book says it. The psalmist that says thy throne oh God is forever and ever a sceptre of righteousness. Is a sceptre of life in you.

David Williams that used to come here was up in Boston the other week. He called me and he said I'm going up to Boston. I said well scout around amongst the old bookstores.

There's a lot of good books up there. Boston used to print a lot of the old books. And he found an old book about something with an old cart behind it.

And it was Isaac Watts' Hymns. I happen to have the same copy, the same edition I guess. And he was saying how he'd been reading them and enjoying them.

And he wrote of course when I surveyed the wondrous cross and a lot of our best hymns. But one that always showed me again some of the vastness of his conception. You know I don't know how to put this but we're all too earthbound.

We can be so heavenly minded we know that we're used but that's not the trouble. Most of us are more earthly than earthbound. We're not heavenly used.

We don't get into eternity enough. We don't soar into heavenly places enough. And Isaac Watts one day meditated on the majesty of Jesus.

And he wrote that in a hymn. Jesus shall reign wherever sun doth its successive journeys run. His kingdom one day will stretch from shore to shore from the width of the whole world.

Till moon shall wax and wane no more. Blessings abound where'er he reigns. The prisoner leaps to lose his chains.

The weary find eternal rest and all the sons of want are blessed. You know that's a great conception. He's going to reign till moon wax and wane no more.

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Man it's not long since Caesar was going down the Amphian way with his all the captives that they got the leading men of the city used to chain them together and chain them to the hub of the Weavery Knot and go marching through Rome and people threw their kisses and hail Caesar. Oh Caesar.

Pity they didn't read the Bible. Do you remember, was it Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar? Nebuchadnezzar? When they raised their hands and said oh king live forever. At the end of the chapter it says that night the king died.

I always think that's a great joke. God pulled the rug from under Hitler's eyes. Everybody says oh king live forever.

What a kingdom you've got. What a great. And you laugh and God says get out of the way.

You know I think that's one of the puzzling things. I think one of the most offensive things to communism is that they know they haven't found an answer to death. People don't die bravely.

They don't die with any hope. Why? Because communism has none. And the triumph of Christianity is that very often young men will kiss the sweet heart goodbye their wife goodbye are holding little babies in their

arms they are darling I'll see you in eternity.

And they have to watch the husband be chewed up by lions. Sometimes they reversed it and let a woman stand there and the lion would leap up and drag the baby out of its mother's arms and chew the baby up in front of the weeping mother and the husband would turn his head away and they'd make him hold his head so he'd have to watch his wife be devoured. Will you say just three words now Caesar is king or do you still say Christ is king? I still say Christ is king.

And push him in the arena. They weren't given dope. They weren't given anything to make them insensible.

Like Jesus on the cross they tried to offer him dope. Put a sponge on a reed and held it up because it was a thing that would put him to sleep. It was actually a drug.

They refused it. No, no. He wouldn't try to escape it.

If he tried to escape it he'd have breathed on them and burned them all up. He'd have rolled back the powers of heaven and get them and he didn't do that. He didn't come to do that.

He was the first. He's the first in everything. He was the first in suffering.

He was the first in resurrection power. He's the first in everything. Think about that.

That really is worth ebony. He's the first to know what it meant for a man to suffer the torture of hell forever because that's why he cried my father, my God, why did I forsake him? He understood why others forsook him. Peter's never been too certain anyhow.

John was a bit weak, bit of a mother's boy. The others weren't too dependable. But God in heaven, why did you forsake me? I thought I could, no I can't.

What is hell? I don't know what the temperature is but I do know one thing what hell is. Hell is separation from God. And Jesus didn't die to put a bridge between hell and heaven.

He died to put a bridge between man's sinfulness and God's holiness. And you know when we look back, again as we've sung so often, it'll be worth it all when we see Jesus. I think the first thing they'll have to give me is some sweat cloth or something when I get to heaven.

I'll be so embarrassed that I was often so shy and fearful and nervous. I'm not usually too nervous but so much I could have done if I'd have been a bit smarter, you know. Oh in that day, when he cometh, when he cometh.

He used to sing that, when he cometh, when he cometh to make up his due. You know that song? You heard it? All his jewels, precious jewels, his loved ones. When he cometh, that's what it says at the end of Malachi.

Man, that's going to be some day. But again, as little as I am and poor as I am and ignorant as I am, I would rather be the least in the kingdom of God than be the greatest sinner in the world. Sinatra is wealthy.

Now Elvis Presley's idol worship and his money and his mansion and all that they've got. I don't end in a hundred. I'm made for eternity.

Let me say one thing. I got a letter from a friend the other day. He told me about this opera singer that used to travel with us.

I think the greatest tenor voice I've ever heard. I never heard Caruso. I've heard records but I enjoyed this man much more.

And he died just the other day. And that brought to mind a time when he'd been home to see his wife and he'd come back to a cruise we were having. And we said, now we've rented a certain theater Sunday night and you'd better be in top form.

There's a lot of people coming, celebrities and what not. And he wanted to sing. And he sang, what do you call it? Oh, O Solo Mio.

Oh, how I love him, how I adore him. My breath, my soul, he could sing that. And he said, I was shaving this morning and I heard such a noise, and there was a squawking outside and all the cats got a bird.

They threw some stuff out on the lawn. Those seagulls, they were near the coast, the whales. Seagulls come scooping in and getting it and sometimes a cat would jump at them.

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