

# The Supremacy of Christ in Truth in a Postmodern World

by Voddie Baucham

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*Voddie Baucham's sermon emphasizes the supremacy of Christ and the importance of absolute truth in addressing life's ultimate questions amidst a postmodern worldview.*

**Duration:** 1:00:39

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:6, John 14:2, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Colossians 1:22-23, Hebrews 9:28

**Topics:** "Postmodern"

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## Description

In this sermon, Vody Balkam addresses the issue of people's hostility towards Jesus and their engagement in evil deeds. He emphasizes that humans were created to bring glory and honor to Jesus, but instead, they are hostile towards Him. Balkam also discusses the influence of philosophy and cultural relativism on ethical judgments, using the example of Nazi Germany. He concludes by stating that every human being, regardless of time or place, asks four fundamental questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is wrong with the world? Balkam suggests that the answers to these questions can be found in the supremacy of Christ and truth.

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## Transcript

The following message was recorded at an event hosted by Desiring God. More information about Desiring God events, conferences, and resources is available at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org). Vodie Baucom was born in Los Angeles and has graduated from Southwestern and Southeastern Baptist Seminaries. He combines three things that stand out to me.

One, husband and father, married to Bridget since 1989 with one daughter and two sons. Two, preaching and leadership at Grace Family Baptist Church in Spring, Texas, which he planted with others in April of this year. Three, an itinerant ministry proclaiming the supremacy of Christ and the compelling force of the Christian worldview with a special focus to those who like to think hard and think clearly about their faith.

He has written *The Family Driven Faith* and *The Ever Loving Truth*, this book here with the subtitle *Can Faith Thrive in a Post-Christian Culture*, which gives me an occasion perhaps to encourage you that the bookstore at this event is not a sidebar, it's part of the main page. And if you don't go there and just bask in the riches, you're missing a very significant element of the conference. So even if you just walk among the riches of what God has put on paper, at least do that.

Just feel the wealth in that store. And this is part of it. So take this home, I hope.

Let me read you a paragraph to give you a flavor of the man. I had a similar encounter after a message I preached from the 14th chapter of John immediately following the service, a woman came barreling toward me. She had no problem with the part of the text which taught that Jesus was preparing a place in his father's house for those who follow him.

She did, however, have, in her words, a serious problem with the idea that Jesus is the only way she spoke in a sympathetic, yet condescending tone as though she were making me aware of what must have been a monumental oversight on my part. However, her sympathy and condescension quickly turned to outrage and disbelief when I assured her that I meant exactly what I said and exactly the way I said it. And she said she couldn't understand how I, of all people, could be so narrow minded.

I've sat under Votie Baucham's ministry twice now, and each time I thought to myself, I am loving this truth and I am basking in this way of saying the truth with so much pleasure. I would love to have Votie Baucham minister at one of the pastors conferences or at one of the Desiring God National Conferences. And when we conceived of this one and I saw the title of this book, I said, there's the golden opportunity.

And I got on the phone and he was willing to do this piece in the conference. So I am deeply honored and happy that, Votie, you have been willing to come. Would you welcome with me, Votie Baucham? Would you join me in a word of prayer? Father, we're grateful to be in your presence and among your people, to have this opportunity to set our minds attention and hearts affection on you and to praise you for who you are and for what you've done.

To have the privilege of entering into this two way conversation that we call worship. Wherein we say things to and about you that we know and believe to be true and anxiously anticipate those moments where you in turn speak to us clearly and powerfully through your word, to the end that our lives would be touched and challenged and changed and transformed and conformed to the very image of Christ. And it is to that moment that we have come, confessing to you, Lord, that we desperately need a word from you.

Because we are inadequate, we are sinful, we are limited, we are finite. We are powerless. And apart from you, we can do nothing.

And so speak, Lord, for your servants indeed are listening and we desire to hear and to heed what it is that you would say. We pray these things because we believe that they are in accordance with the will and the nature and the authority of Jesus, who is the Christ and all God's people said, Amen. Well, good morning.

I am honored to be here with you this morning. I have looked forward to this for quite some time. The only difficulty, of course, is that, you know, I look down here and I see, for example, Dr. Carson here and I'm trying to figure out, because I quote him all the time, you know, do you do you do you quote the guy while he's sitting there? Or so, you know, excuse me for a moment.

Would it would be OK? OK, all right. I just had to clear that up, you know, in all honesty, this is an honor for me and my intention as I prayed through this and as I thought about the wealth of knowledge, the wealth of information, as I thought about the treasure of men who have come together for this conference and I thought about my piece and my part in this conference. My prayer was, Lord, grant me grace to stand up, speak up and shut up and to do it quickly.

And so that is my intention here this morning so that we can get on with it and continue to be blessed and at times overwhelmed. I was just tremendously blessed on last night. And for those of you who were here on last night, you know what I'm talking about.

And we got off to a roaring start. And so I'm looking forward to the rest of this conference as much as I can stay and be a part of it. I want to do my job and talk about the supremacy of Christ and truth in a postmodern world.

Now, that is an ironic title, the supremacy of Christ and truth in a postmodern world. Because if you know anything about postmodernity, you know that that word truth at times is a difficult one to grasp and is a difficult one to bring alongside postmodern epistemology. But being difficult to grasp or difficult to sort of incorporate in postmodern epistemology is not really the issue at hand.

Because the first part of that title, the supremacy of Christ, is the issue at hand. See, postmodernism is not what is supreme in this world. Christ is that which is supreme in this world.

So if there is an issue between Christ and postmodernity, guess who wins all day, every day, and twice on Sunday? There are two main competing worldviews in our culture. Those two main competing worldviews have been referred to by many different titles. But for the sake of this morning, let me sort of distinguish them this way.

There is Christian theism on the one hand, and this secular humanism, this postmodern version of secular humanism on the other. And although it is somewhat of an oversimplification, just bear with me for a moment. Because what I would like to do is sort of set the stage for you in looking at these two competing worldviews.

Then address what I like to call life's ultimate questions from the perspective of each of these two worldviews. And look at what the Scriptures have to say in regard to these ultimate questions. As it relates to these two worldviews, I want to look at them categorically.

We'll look at them through the major categories of how they answer questions of God, the question of man, the question of truth, the question of knowledge, and the question of ethics. Now there are some who would add a couple of other worldview categories, but for now, those five will suffice. When it comes to the question of God, for example, Christian theism obviously looks at the question from a theistic perspective.

There is a God who is a necessary and intelligent, sovereign, all-powerful being. On the other hand, however, this postmodern secular humanism is really at its core atheistic. There is no God in secular humanism.

Man is the starting point in secular humanism. Now, that is rather ironic in our culture because secular humanism is the overriding worldview of most of the people in our culture, yet when we poll Americans, for example, the overwhelming majority say that they believe in God. Just put a pin there for a moment, we'll come back to it.

Secondly, as to the question of the nature of man, Christian theism sees man as special creation, made in the very image of God, whereas this postmodern secular humanism sees man as a single-celled organism run amok, a glorified ape who has lost most of his hair and gained opposable thumbs, a cosmic accident with no real rhyme or reason. To the question of truth, Christian theism looks at the question of truth and

says that truth is absolute. Whatever is true is true for all people in all places at all times, whereas this postmodern secular humanism views truth differently.

Classic secular humanism viewed truth through the epistemological lens of naturalistic materialism. Nature is a closed system, and so all that we can know, we can only know through this closed system called nature, which is why it's inherently atheistic, because if nature is a closed system, then there is by definition no such thing as the supernatural. Now, when you combine these things, and it doesn't seem that you would be able to combine these things, if you believe in this sort of naturalistic materialism, why would you ever presume to refer to yourself as a Christian or anything like a Christian, or say that you have a belief in some God, when from an epistemological perspective, you have excluded even the possibility of God? Folks, trust me when I tell you that there are plenty of people who openly make this assertion.

For example, John Shelby Spong, in his book, *A New Christianity for a New World*, openly argues from the perspective of naturalistic materialism. And he argues that what we need to do is move toward a non-theistic view of God. And you can help me on that.

Come see me later on. But we have evolved to this theistic perspective, and we need to continue to evolve to a non-theistic view of God. And so, as a result of latching on to this epistemology, you have a man who spent 30 years in pastoral ministry, was a lecturer at Harvard Divinity School, who says things like, and I quote, I do not believe that Jesus was born by the miracle of a virgin birth, nor do I believe virgin births happen anywhere except in mythology.

I do not believe that angels sang to hillside shepherds to announce his birth, or that he fled to Egypt to escape the wrath of King Herod. I do not believe that the event Christians celebrate at Easter was the literal resurrection of the three days dead body of Jesus. That's what happens when you cloak yourself in priestly robes, but hold on to this kind of secular human epistemology that views nature as a closed system.

And man is no more than an evolved beast. What about the view of ethics? Well, Christian theism views ethics as absolute, whereas secular humanism and its post-modern secular humanism views ethics as cultural and negotiable. What's ethical in your culture is not necessarily what is ethical in another culture.

And each culture negotiates its own ethics. And each period of time, each period of history negotiates its own ethics. Therefore, there are many history professors who are unwilling to say that what Nazi Germany did in its attempt to exterminate the Jews was unethical, because somehow it fit within the framework of their negotiated ethics within the context of their culture and their time.

And with these two frameworks, I want us to look at how it lives itself out in real life, and how we address this issue of truth, and the supremacy of Christ in truth in the post-modern world. I believe that every human being who has ever lived or will ever live is asking, has asked, and or will ask four basic questions. They are the same four basic questions no matter where you live, whether you are in Asia or Africa or Europe or here in North America.

They are the same four basic questions, whether you lived in the first century or the 21st century, or if the Lord should tarry, you live in the 31st century. These four questions are these. Who am I? Why am I here? What is wrong with the world? And how can what is wrong be made right? We may not all articulate those questions, but it is in the soul of every man to wrestle with those questions.

Who am I? What is my nature? What is my essence? Why am I here? What is my goal? What is my purpose? What is wrong with the world? Because it is obvious that something is wrong. And how can what is wrong be made right? Because the idea of a world where it cannot be made right is unthinkable and unlivable. Allow me to answer these questions first from the perspective of our culture.

And then we'll look at the book of Colossians, Colossians chapter 1, to answer them from the perspective of Christian theism. If we ask this postmodern secular humanism this question, or these four questions, here are the answers we get. Who am I? The answer, you are nothing.

You are an accident. You are a mistake. You are a glorified ape.

That's all you are. You are the result of random evolutionary processes. That is it.

No rhyme, no reason, no purpose. That is all you are. Why am I here? You are here to consume and enjoy.

Get all you can, can all you get, sit on the can. That's why you're here. That's the only thing that matters.

Remember when they asked the question of Lee Iacocca, when Chrysler was at its apex, and he was making money hand over fist, how much money would be enough? He was as honest as any man has ever been. His answer, a little bit more, always a little bit more. Consume and enjoy.

That's why you're here. By the way, when you put these two things together, you get terrible results. If I have no rhyme or reason for my existence, if I am no more than the result of random evolutionary processes, and I only exist to consume and enjoy, the only thing that matters is if I'm more powerful than you.

And if you have something I need for my enjoyment. Because if you have something I need for my enjoyment, and I am more powerful than you are, and there is no rhyme or reason to your existence, then it is incumbent upon me to take from you what I need for my own satisfaction. Have we not seen this? Have we not seen this lived out in the world? Have we not seen the logical conclusion of this kind of social Darwinism? Have we not seen a culture that at one time said, there is one race that is further evolved than all other races.

And because the Aryan race is further evolved than all other races, it is incumbent upon the Aryan race to dominate and or exterminate other races in order to usher in the next level of our evolution. But don't look down on them. Don't look down on their scientists and their biologists who looked upon Jews as things and not people in order to justify their extermination, because that's exactly what our scientists and biologists do to the baby in the womb.

The same concept of eugenics. The same concept of all that is is an inconvenient lump of flesh or even more sinister. This child will be severely deformed and will therefore hinder your ability to consume and enjoy or worse.

You are old and feeble. The end is near. You not only have a right to die, but you have a duty to die.

We can give you this cocktail and your children won't have to take care of you anymore. Who am I? According to secular humanism, I'm nothing. Why am I here? To make the most of it, to consume and enjoy while I can.

What is wrong with the world? Well, if you ask secular humanism what is wrong with the world, the answer is very simple. People are either insufficiently educated or insufficiently governed. That's what's wrong with the world.

People either don't know enough or they're not being watched enough. That's what's wrong with the world. How can what is wrong be made right? More education.

More government. That's the only answer our culture can come up with. Teach people more stuff.

The only problem with that is if you take a sinful, murderous human being and educate that individual, they merely become more sophisticated in their ability to destroy. Well, then we need to govern them more. Really? Who's governing the governors? The answers to these questions leave those who adhere to this philosophy wanting and empty and lacking.

How then do we respond? I'm so glad you asked. Open your Bibles with me to Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. And let's see how the Bible responds to these same questions. Let's see how the Christian worldview responds to these same issues.

Let's see how the supremacy of Christ can be applied to life's ultimate questions. To the questions of who am I and why am I here and what is wrong with the world and how can what is wrong be made right. Colossians chapter 1. Begin with me in verse 15.

As we take these questions in turn. Question number one. Who am I? Look beginning verse 15.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Here's the irony. The question is, who am I? It almost seems like the text didn't answer the question. If you're starting with me, if you're starting with man and my question is, who am I? Why does the text start with He is? Because of the supremacy of Christ in truth.

You see the text begins with Christ as the creator of all things. So the answer to the question, who am I? Begins with who Jesus is. He is the image of the invisible God.

He is the icon, if you will. He is the exact representation. He is the picture in human flesh of who God is.

He is God on this earth. He is God with us. God among us.

He is the Almighty. For by Him all things were created. He is the creator of all things.

Well, which things? In heaven? On earth? Thrones? Dominions? Rulers? Authorities? All things were made by Him. All things were made through Him. This harkens back to John 1.1. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Which also harkens back to Genesis 1.1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. If we continue to read, we find these marvelous words. Let us make man in our image and in our likeness.

So who am I? Secular humanism says that I am the result of random processes. Christian theism says I am the crowning glory of the creation of God. Christian theism says He knit me together in my mother's

womb.

Christian theism says I am no accident. I am no result of random processes. Christian theism says whether I am tall and beautiful or whether I am small and not so handsome, whether my body functions perfectly or I am deformed severely, I am the crowning glory of the creation of God.

And as a result, I have inherent dignity and inherent worth and inherent value. Christian theism cannot comprehend ideas like racism and classism and eugenics. Christian theism looks at the black man and the not so black man.

You categorize the world how you want to, I'll categorize the world how I want to. But it's okay that you're not black like me. God loves you just like you are.

And the question always comes, well, if that's the case, it's always hovering, even when people don't ask it. The question hovers. It lingers.

I don't like lingering and hovering questions. I say let's get it over with. Here's the lingering and hovering question.

You say that in the context and confines of this Christian theism, there is no room for this kind of racism, but we know for a fact that there have been cultures who claimed, on the one hand, this allegiance to Christian theism. And on the other hand, they embraced racism and slavery. What are you going to do with that? I don't have to do anything with that.

Narrative is not normative. Just because it happened doesn't mean it was right. Here's my issue.

It stopped. What made it stop? What was the underlying worldview that rose up and said, this is inconsistent? What was the underlying worldview that says, we are an exercise in cognitive dissonance here? What was the underlying worldview that rose up and said, you cannot, on the one hand, claim allegiance to Christian theism, and on the other hand, despise men because of the color of their skin? Was it wrong? Yes, it was wrong. But by what standard? By the standard of the supremacy of Christ.

Secular humanism can't grasp this truth. But when we grasp the supremacy of Christ, we can't escape this truth. Who am I? Who are you? The crowning glory of the creation of God.

I don't care what anyone has ever said to you, what anyone has ever told you. I don't care if your mother and your father look you in your eye and told you that you were a mistake. You're the crowning glory of the creation of God.

I will never forget the moment I grasped this. I spent much of my life wondering why. I was raised by a single teenage mother in the projects in south central Los Angeles.

She was 17 years old when she became pregnant with me. She and my father married briefly, but she ended up raising me alone from the time I was about a year old. Raising me in the drug-infested, gang-infested projects in south central Los Angeles, where at that time the average life expectancy for a young black male was somewhere around 24.

I have often asked why, especially in light of our culture today that looks at young women in my mother's condition and says, it would be irresponsible for you to carry this pregnancy through. But who am I? The crowning glory of the creation of God, regardless of the circumstances surrounding my birth or yours.

Regardless of difficulties or infirmities with which you wrestle.

Regardless of your class or your station in life. Because of the supremacy of Christ in truth, you are what the creator of the universe says you are. And by breathing into you the very breath of life, he says you have value.

He says you have dignity. He says you have worth. And he says that I had better recognize that in you as well as in myself.

And so we see the supremacy of Christ in truth in question number one. Question number two, why am I here? This post-modern secular humanism basically says that we are here to make the most of it. There is no rhyme or reason, so we're here to make the most of it.

Consume, enjoy. That's why you're here. This is the overarching mentality in our culture, both inside and outside of the church.

This is the overarching mentality that brings us to this place of unquenchable materialism. This is the overarching and overriding mentality that causes people in our culture, where the rest of the world looks at children as a blessing, we look at them as a blight and as a burden. Where the poorest nations in the world talk about how many children they can have, we talk about how many children we can afford.

We have houses that are larger than they've ever been, and families that are smaller than they've ever been. Cars, minivans. Why? When our attitude toward children is, a boy for me and a girl for you, and praise the Lord we're finally through.

Why? Because they get in the way of our consumption and our enjoyment. They cost too much. That's secular humanism.

Christian theism looks at the question of why are we here and answers it very differently. Again we go to the supremacy of Christ. Look at the next part of the text.

All things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and Him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. All things were created through Him and all things were created for Him. The ultimate purpose of all things is to bring Him glory and honor, and that He might have the supremacy in all things.

So who am I? The crowning glory of the creation of God. Why am I here? To bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why I exist.

That is why you exist. That is why He breathed into us the very breath of life. He is to have supremacy and preeminence in all things.

He is to have supremacy and preeminence in your life. Supremacy and preeminence in the church. Supremacy and preeminence over death and hell and the grave.

Supremacy and preeminence over all. So why am I here? Not just to consume and to enjoy. And listen, let me clarify this.

God is not against you having things. He is just against things having you. And there is a vast difference between the two.

But we exist to bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have the privilege of lecturing on college campuses all around this country. And this is an issue that I love to bring to the fore when dealing with these college students.

Because most of them walk onto that campus and they have one thing in mind. What can I get here that will facilitate my consumption and enjoyment? That's why most people change their majors three or four times before they get out of college. Here's how you do it.

You come to college and you have major number one. Oftentimes a dream major. It has nothing to do with your aptitude.

It's a dream. I meet students all the time. And I always shake their hand and ask them a couple of questions.

I ask them where they're from. I ask them what they're studying. I ask them what year they're in.

And this happens. I walk up and I shake hands. Hey, how are you doing? Where are you from? Oh, I'm from Podunk, Iowa.

Great. What are you studying? Pre-med and microbiology. My next question is, you're a freshman, right? To which they respond, well, yes.

How did you know that? That stuff is hard. You won't be in it next year. But again, hey, if that's your aptitude, I'm not talking about if that's your aptitude.

I'm talking about if you just walk in and that's your dream because of the prestige of that position. That's how we get major number one, that dream major. How do we get major number two? You go to Fortune 500 magazine, find out who's making the most money, which one of them have the least amount of education.

You major in that. That becomes difficult. How do you get major number three? Oh, around the second semester of your junior year, you walk into a counselor's office and say, excuse me, but what do I have the most hours in? Yep, sounds like I'll be taking that right there.

By that time, our major is get outology. How about this radical idea? God met you together in your mother's womb. Gave you a unique mix of gifts and talents and abilities and desires.

And what would it look like if we grasped the supremacy of Christ in truth as it relates to our very purpose for existing? And saw to it that all of our education, as Richard Baxter would say, that Christ would be the beginning and the end and the supreme goal of all of our education. What if we saw our studies as stewardship? What if we raised our children not to go and do something that would make us proud? But what if we raised them with a keen eye toward discovering the way that God has put them together so that we could shepherd them and nurture them toward allowing God to squeeze out of them all that He has put into them. Because we continually taught them and focused on the supremacy of Christ in truth as it relates to their very purpose for existing.

He is before all things. Why did you choose your last job? Was it because of the supremacy of Christ in truth as it relates to your purpose for existing? Or was it because it paid you more than the place you were before? Pastor, how did you choose your current church? Was it because of a pursuit of the supremacy of Christ in truth in all things even as it relates to your pastoral purpose? Or was it because this position is a little more prestigious than your last one? All things were made through Him and for Him. What about the next question? What is wrong with the world? There is obviously something wrong with the world.

Look at the next part of the text. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself having made peace through the blood of His cross. Through Him, I say, were the things on earth or things in heaven.

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds. Stop! What is wrong with the world? You! I mean, me too, but mainly you. Hostile in mind and engaged in evil deeds.

What is wrong with the world? You are the crowning glory of the creation of God. You were created to live and bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. And instead, you are hostile toward the one by whom and for whom you were created.

That is what is wrong with the world. My students come up to me all the time after taking the semester in philosophy. There ought to be a rule.

You should not be able to talk about philosophy unless you had more than a semester of philosophy. If you haven't had any, that's fine. Talk away.

But if you've had a semester, you are messed up. You'd be better off just not taking it at all. And they'll come up and they'll say things to me, and they fought these things out.

And I'm on the campus to talk about these issues and dealing with apologetics, and they want to catch me alone and ask me these questions. And they look at me and they say, I just wanted to ask you that if you believe in a God that is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, then how do you reconcile the issue of theodicy, to which I respond, took a semester of philosophy, right? Well, yes, how did you know? Because if you hadn't, you'd have just said, listen, God's so powerful and so good. How come bad stuff happens? But I'm not going to answer the question until you ask it correctly.

I worked on that all week. What do you mean, ask it correctly? You're not asking the question properly. What do you mean, ask the question properly? It's my question.

You can't tell me how to ask my question. I will answer your question when you ask it properly. How do I ask it properly? Here's how you ask that question properly.

You look me in my eyes and you ask me this. How on earth can a holy and righteous God know what I did and thought and said on yesterday and not kill me in my sleep last night? You ask it that way and we can talk. But until you ask the question that way, you don't understand the issue.

Until you ask the question that way, you believe the problem is out there. Until you ask the question that way, you believe that there are somehow some individuals who in and of themselves deserve something other than the wrath of almighty God. Until you ask me the question that way.

Until you flip the script and ask the question this way and say, why is it that we are here today? Why has he not consumed and devoured each and every one of us? Why? Why, oh God, does your judgment and your wrath tarry? When you ask it that way, you understand the issue. When you ask it the other way, you believe in the supremacy of man. How dare God not employ his power on behalf of almighty man? You flip the question around, you believe in the supremacy of Christ.

How dare I steal his heir? Because the last breath I took, I borrowed it from him. And I'm never going to give it back. When you borrow something and never give it back, you're stealing.

So we need to take a moment and get right right now. The problem is me. The problem is the fact that I do not acknowledge the supremacy of Christ in truth.

The problem is I start with me as the measure of all things. The problem is I judge God based upon how well he carries out my agenda for the world. And I believe in the supremacy of me in truth.

And as a result, I want a God who is omnipotent but not sovereign. If I have a God who is omnipotent but not sovereign, I can wield his power. But if my God is both omnipotent and sovereign, I am at his mercy.

Who am I? The crowning glory of the creation of God. Knit together in my mother's womb. Why am I here? To bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is wrong with the world? Me. I don't do what I was meant to do. How can what is wrong be made right? Look at the last part of the text.

Verse 22. One of the most beautiful words in the whole Bible. Yet.

I needed that. Amen. Can you imagine what life would be like if statements like these in the scriptures weren't followed by yet.

Nevertheless. But yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. If.

If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established, steadfast, not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard. Which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. How can what is wrong be made right? We see two things in that last set of statements.

Number one, we see that what is wrong can be made right. By the penal substitutionary atoning death of Christ. And secondly, by that if statement, we see that it cannot be made right any other way.

The supremacy of Christ in truth and redemption. We see the supremacy of Christ in his exclusivity. There is no other means by which man can be justified.

There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Christ died for sin once for all, the just for the unjust in order that he might bring us back to God. All we like sheep had gone astray.

Each of us had turned to his own way. But God had caused the iniquity of us all to rest on him. How can what is wrong be made right? What is the answer? Every other religious system in the world, and again, an oversimplification, but forgive me for the sake of time.

Every other religion in the world basically boils down to this. You need to have a religious experience. And from that moment on, you need to do more good things than bad and then hope for the best when you die.

They may differ in what that experience needs to be and how they define the good. But ultimately, I need to have an experience. And from that moment on, I need to do everything in my power to do more of the good and less of the bad.

And still there is no certainty or security. I wrestled with this as a young freshman in college. See, here's what I didn't tell you about my upbringing.

I didn't grow up around Christians or around Christianity. My mother was a practicing Buddhist. I never heard the gospel until I got to college.

I wrestled with this. And ultimately, here's what I wrestled with. Everything tells me I'm supposed to have a religious experience and then do more good than bad and hope for the best when I die.

Three problems with that. Number one, I can't be good. I tried.

I can't do it. I'm incapable of it. I am totally, radically depraved.

Beyond a shadow of any doubt. I can't be good. Even when I do things that look to be good, I do them for wrong motives and that destroys the good that was in them.

I can't be good. Second problem, what about all the things I did before my religious experience? Third problem, where's my assurance? The answer, the supremacy of Christ in truth as it relates to redemption. The answer, God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

The answer, after God has apparently overlooked these sins in days gone by. And as it would have appeared that there could have been some question about his justice. As it would have appeared that someone somewhere could have said, God, how can you claim to be righteous? And you did not crush Moses, the murderer.

You did not crush Abraham, the liar. You did not crush David, the adulterer. How, oh God? As though there were a moment in time where some of those questions could have been legitimately asked.

There came a day when God crushed and killed his son. And satisfied his wrath in order that he might be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. Was that enough for Adam's sin? Was that enough for Moses' sin? Was that enough for Abraham's sin? Can you hear the rhetorical questions from Calvary? Was that enough for your sin? Was that enough for you to recognize the supremacy of Christ in truth as it relates to redemption? There was nothing else that could have been done.

That would have allowed God to be both just and our justifier. But in Christ, in his humiliation and his exaltation, the question is answered. How can what is wrong be made right? What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow. That makes me white as snow.

I know nothing but the blood of Jesus. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

How can what is wrong be made right? The spotless, sinless Lamb of God is crushed, rejected, and killed to pay a debt that he did not owe on behalf of sinners who could never pay him back. Who am I? The crowning glory of the creation of God. Why am I here? To bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is wrong with the world? Me and everyone like me who refuse to acknowledge the supremacy of Christ and live in pursuit of the supremacy of self. How can what is wrong be made right? Through the penal, substitutionary, atoning death of the Son of God. And through repentance and faith on the part of sinners.

You juxtapose these two worldviews and something very interesting happens. On the one hand you are left empty and you are left hopeless. On the one hand man is left worthless.

On the one hand you are left to pursue your own satisfaction and never find it. And on the other you are precious. You have a purpose but you are powerless.

But it's okay because you were purchased. This is the supremacy of Christ in truth. In a postmodern world.

As we walk through the highways and byways and look into the lifeless eyes of individuals who have bought the lie. Let us rest assured that we possess the answer. And we are possessed by the answer.

The answer is Christ and His supremacy in truth. Let us rest assured that those who walk aimlessly through this life will never be satisfied with the answers that our culture has seen fit to give. And the further we have run away from the supremacy of Christ.

The further we have run away from the only thing that will ever satisfy. And the only thing that will ever suffice. Let us rest assured that the supremacy of Christ in truth also means the sufficiency of Christ in truth.

We preach Jesus and Him crucified. And I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Because it is the power of God unto salvation for those who believe.

To the Jew first and also to the Greek. This is the supremacy of Christ in truth. In a postmodern, pre-Christian, dying, rotting, decaying, and hurting world.

Let us therefore embrace it and proclaim it passionately, confidently, and relentlessly. Because after all, that is why we are here. Thank you for listening to this message from Desiring God.

The ministry of John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Feel free to make copies of this message for others. But please do not charge for those copies or alter the content in any way without permission.

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