

# Colossians 1:15

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[ 0 : 00 ] We've been looking for the last few weeks at this chapter in Colossians. Colossians chapter 1. Why don't we turn there? There's lots of turning to different places in the Bible today. So page 1183 Colossians 1 and verse 15. Let me read it to you.

He is the image of the invisible God, that is the Lord Jesus.  
He is the Lord of the Church.

Verse 18, he is the body, the head of the body, the church. But today I want to finish off by looking at that Jesus is the Lord of the whole creation. Jesus is the Lord of the whole creation.

And I think as I've studied this passage over the last couple of weeks, I've realised that my view of Jesus is too small and too restricted. He is not big enough.

[ 1 : 36 ] I was a very good long distance runner. I was in school, but you have to do kind of laps around the thing, you know, kind of 1,500, 3,000 metres. And you're going around this one. And I would be chugging along. And there was one boy, Matthew Priest, my friend, who was very good. And on the first lap, we would be quite far apart.

By the second lap, he would be on the other side of the track. The third lap, he would normally lap me. And you would get so discouraged, wouldn't you, if somebody laps you. And then when you get to about lap nine and he's passing you for the second time.

And then by the time you get to lap 13, and you've been passed the third time, that's it, isn't it? That is humiliating. And we started this week, didn't we, by looking at the great heroes of the world.

David Beckham, the, I don't know who the heroes of the world are. Those great singers. The great icons of our age. And as we live in Colossians 1, what we see is Jesus isn't just greater than them. He doesn't just beat them, he laps them.

And he laps them. And that's what we're going to see today. He's going to lap them again. We're going to see today that Jesus has relevance in the realm of the invisible. He is the Son of God. But I think it's important for you and I to realise he has equal relevance in the realm of the visible. In what you can see. In what you can touch. And what you can taste. So do you see it in verse 15? He is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of all creation. He is the Lord of all. He's the Lord of the cosmos.

[ 3 : 03 ] He's not just the Lord of man. He's not just the Lord of the church. He's not Lord of the spiritual realm. Whatever that is. He is the Lord of the cosmos, the universe, galaxies, genes, trees, oceans, councils.

Every sparrow that falls to the ground he is Lord of. And so that's what I want to try and tease out. The relationship of this fantastic Jesus to creation. So look at verse 16. We are told there, first point, that Jesus is intimately involved in the beginning of all things.

You find it there in verse 16. He's intimately involved in the beginning of all things. For by him all things were created. All things in heaven. All things on earth. All things visible. All things invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities or councils. All things were created through him and for him. Everything came into existence by and through Jesus Christ.

He was the agent by which all that exists came into being. Heaven. We go to heaven this last time. And we can see all the angels and the heavenly hosts.

[ 4 : 16 ] And all the tribes and tongues and nations and people around the throne praising God. He is the ruler of heaven. The spiritual realm came into creation through him.

But also the physical realm. What we can see. What we can taste. What we can touch. What we can feel. Came into being through him. It's taught in many, many other places in the Bible, isn't it? So come with me, if you will, to John's Gospel.

Alright? John's Gospel, chapter 1. John's Gospel, chapter 1, verses 1 to 3. It's on page 1068. I'll go quickly. So if you don't want to turn to them, you can just listen. In the beginning was the Word. That's the Lord Jesus. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Here we go. All things were made through him. And without him was not anything made that was made.

Now did you get that? All things were made through him. And without him was not anything made that was made. Go to Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 2. Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 2.

[ 5 : 12 ] It's on page 1203. Long ago, the original Hebrews says that many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he's spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things.

Here we go. Through whom also he created the world. Jesus Christ is not just a Son of God. And he's not just a Son of man.

He is the one through whom all things were brought into being. He is the one who is inextricably linked with the beginning of everything. But more than that, he is inextricably linked with the beginning of everything.

He is inextricably linked with the continuation of everything from day to day. So come back to me in Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. It's on page 1183. And look what it says about the Lord Jesus in verse 17.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. That is, his mightiness. The Lord Jesus Christ has got the whole world in his hands.

[ 6 : 17 ] He's got the whole world in his hands. I should have told you to keep a finger in Hebrews chapter 1. But let me read you from verse 3 again. But in these last days, or sorry, it says in the Lord Jesus verse 3 of Hebrews 1, he is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

He is upholding the universe by the word of his power. He is sustaining all things by his words.

Hebrew, Revelation, the last book in the Bible, so you can all go there, Revelation chapter 3. It talks about the Lord Jesus, and it says this about him in verse 14. Page 1237.

It's an angel of the church of May this year. The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, Lord Jesus, the beginning of God's creation. And they are significant words.

They're significant terms about the Lord Jesus, and his relationship, to the world around us. He keeps it unified. He keeps it together. He keeps it coherent.

[ 7 : 28 ] He sustains it. He is ruling it. Now, I don't know whether you noticed in those verses that I read out. They're not static terms, are they? They're not static terms. It's not like he's a watchmaker.

You know, some people say, if you found a watch in the grass, you know there has to be a watchmaker, don't you? And that's one of the arguments for creation. You see the glory of creation, so you know there must be a creator.

But that is actually a very bad illustration when it comes to God. Because God did not make the world, and then just spin it like that, and he leaves it go. No, no, these verses tell us that God is sustaining it.

God is upholding it. The Lord Jesus is sustaining it, keeping it unified. It's not static terms. There is progress. There is the moving towards a goal. That if Jesus stopped, is upholding, everything would disappear.

If Jesus withdrew his word of power, it would be zero. Zilch. Nothing. If Jesus stopped, upholding, sustaining, ruling, keeping it unified, keeping it coherent, the world would disappear in an instant.

[ 8 : 33 ] It is only because this mighty Lord Jesus is upholding, sustaining it in existence, and working it towards an end. Can you see that at the end of verse 20 of Colossians 1?

And through him, the Lord Jesus, to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.

Can you see that? Through him, to reconcile to himself all things, not just human beings. There is a day coming when all of creation will be reconciled to God.

That is the great goal of this upholding, sustaining, and ruling of this Lord Jesus Christ. So that one day, we'll all somehow be brought together, reconciled to God. Now we know, don't we, we know our Bibles at all, we know that this is a fallen world, we know, that when human beings fell into sin, there was a curse upon creation.

I took a funeral this morning. You're never more aware, are you, of the curse of God, than when you have to go to one of those grim crematoriums. But do you notice, even though human beings fell into sin, and there's a curse upon creation, it is not the pre-fall creation that God upholds.

[ 9 : 56 ] God is still upholding creation now, it says, under the curse. He is still upholding this corruptible creation. He's still upholding this cursed cosmos, and he upholds it, and rules it, and unifies it, and moves it towards its ultimate goal, which is reconciliation with God.

And that's it, this is Romans chapter 8. Let's go to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8, I'll show it on the page, it is, page 1138. And this is what Paul says.

It's actually been 1137. Right at the bottom. Page 1137. He says, For the creation, and the word he uses there, is the word that we would use, that animals, trees, rivers, it is, it is physical creation. Alright? For the creation wince, with eager longing, longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation, was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him, who subjected it in hope. That the creation itself, will be set free, from its bondage to decay, and obtain the freedom, of the glory, of the children of God. What is Paul talking about there? He's saying that creation, is on its tiptoes.

[ 11 : 09 ] You know when you go to a football match, or a rugby match, or a sporting match, and the play moves into the corner, and you can't seize. And so everybody stands up, and everybody cranes their neck. Or there's an accident, a road accident, and everyone stops, and people are craning, and they're on their tiptoes, looking.

That is what it's saying, creation is like. The earth itself, is in bondage to decay. But it is being upheld, by the Lord Jesus, in its present situation.

But even creation, is longing, is on tiptoes, is craning its neck, in eager expectation, for when the curse, will be removed.

when corruption, will be taken away, when creation, will be liberated, once and for all. And there'll be no more, thorns and thistles, in your garden.

And there'll be no more, weeds, that will kill your flowers. And there'll be no more, funerals, and there'll be no more, grotty crematoriums. Because, all creation, will be liberated, from its bondage to decay, once and for all.

[ 12 : 15 ] Now do you see, Jesus Christ is, inextricably linked, with this world continuing. He upholds it. He sustains it. But thirdly this, he's moving it towards, its goal, that glorious culmination.

This climax one day. And so Jesus Christ, has everything to do, with the beginning of the world. He has everything to do, with the sustaining of this world, and the upholding of this world. And he has everything to do, with the end of the world.

So look at verse 16, of Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. I'm not even there now, so I'm trying to find it. Colossians chapter 10. And look at verse 16.

For by him all things, were created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions. Or rulers, or authorities. All things were created, through him, and for him.

What's the purpose of creation? It's for him. For Christ. Hebrews chapter 1 again, says this. It says, But in these last days, he's spoken to us by his son, he means appointed the heir, of all things.

[ 13 : 32 ] He's not the heir of the church only. He's not the heir of the redeemed saints only. He's not only the heir of the church, but he is the heir of all things.

Everything. All things that were created. Heaven and earth. And ultimately, they were created to be his, when it is reconciled once more to God.

So let's go back, to the book of Isaiah. And we see this lovely, lovely picture. Isaiah chapter 11. It's a glorious picture, of what that reconciliation will be like.

Let me read it to you. You know the words. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf, and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze. Their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra.

[ 14 : 33 ] Imagine that. And the weaned child shall put his hand on the adders, down. That's what it will ultimately be like. It's a picture of the glorious reconciliation, of all things to Christ.

They shall not hurt or destroy, and all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Fantastic Jesus will do that.

So Colossians 1 verse 18 says, And he is the head of the party of the church, he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything, in everything, in everything he might be preeminent. God the Father, wants you and I to see God the Son, the Lord Jesus, as supreme.

He, the Lord Jesus, is to have the supremacy of all things. not just the spiritual realm, but the material created realm as well.

Now what do we make of this? How do we apply it? I can't quite do a lot of things through the applications of this. There are two immediate general consequences out there to this teaching.

Firstly, as we've learned, Jesus Christ is intimately, infinitely interested in his creation.

[16:02] Isn't he? Isn't he? He is upholding it second by second. Of course he is interested in it. He is infinitely concerned about physical creation, all things.

Because he knows that ultimately, he is to be the heir of all things. He must have a concern about this earth, about this material realm.

He brought it into existence, he is sustaining it, and one day it will be his. He must be concerned about it. He must be interested in it. And you see, that was a big problem for me, and for people like me.

Because very often, we're not interested in the world. We're not interested in the community. We're not interested on the effects that we have on the environment.

The problem is this. My Lord is interested in it. Our Lord is concerned with the material realm.

Because it is his. He is upholding it.

[17:08] And one day, it will be his possession forever and ever. And he will be supreme over it.

And surely, if he has that interest in it, shouldn't I, as his child? This glorious being, which has been brought, this glorious, this glorious creature, which has been brought into being by the word of his power, is upheld by the word of his power, and one day it will be reconciled to him, by him, to God, and will be given back to the Lord Jesus, and we will see that he is supreme in all things.

The first general consequence is this. We cannot stick our heads in the sand. And we must be concerned with the world. We must be concerned with God's creation.

We must be concerned with the area which we live. We must be concerned with things like planning. Simple as that. We must be concerned with things like railways.

We must be concerned about those things. I'm not arguing that you've got to go and sign up for Greenpeace and go on some boat in the middle of nowhere. But as Christians, we must be people who are concerned about the area in which we live.

We must be concerned, because if Jesus has that interest, shouldn't I? That's the first general consequence. We must be concerned about the world and about the bigness of Jesus. He is the Lord of creation. Secondly, and I think this is a bigger issue, we do have a problem with the dichotomy, don't we?

[18:38] So we talk about the secular and the secret. And we talk about the material and the spiritual. And life is seemingly divided into two compartments. But as I've looked at this passage, that isn't actually right.

Jesus Christ is the great unifying factor. He brings all the elements of our human existence under one head. He unifies it. He unifies our full understanding of our being.

He is Lord over all, isn't He? He is the great unifying factor. And I think we do have a problem here.

We think that going to Bible study has more to do with Christianity than our going to work.

We think evangelism is more important than caring for our homes. No, it is all of it under the Lordship of Christ.

Everything we do, whether it is directly to do with the spiritual and the invisible or the visible and the material, both equally have to do with Christ.

[19:44] Christ. And so, my wife came home from work yesterday and I said, how was work? And she said, work was work. And what that means is, I don't want to talk about it.

That's fair enough. You are going back to work many of you this afternoon. And your work matters. Your work matters.

Because Jesus Christ is Lord over all in your office. And we have to relate everything in our lives to Him, the Head, the Lord of creation.

So just flick forward. Can you all do this? Go to Colossians 3, verse 17. Because I think when we understand who Jesus is, then it makes this verse really stand out. It says this.

Verse 17. Colossians 3, verse 17. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

[ 20 : 52 ] And whatever you do, whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. He is Lord of all.

John Calvin very helpfully talked about two books. There are two books that tell us about God. There is the book of nature, creation.

Psalm 19, it's in the heavens, declare the glory of God. God. And there is the book of Revelation. That we can only know God through Revelation, through Jesus Christ. So we have these two books.

We have the book of nature and we have the book of Revelation. God wrote both books. And that means, as I finish, that we must not, we must not be afraid of science.

This is more and more. That we must not be afraid of science. There's lots of questions that this talk raises, isn't there? About the role of creation. But as Christians, we mustn't worry when scientists come up with all these great theories.

[ 21 : 59 ] We can stand back and say, well, lots of them are not proven. But Jesus is Lord over creation. It is his world. He is ruling it. He is governing it. He is sustaining it. And we have the book of Revelation.

And we must enjoy and care for creation. I even want to say, I think it is a sin not to enjoy creation. Because the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Jesus Lord. Lots of questions. I'll pray. And then we've got a few minutes so you can ask them.