

Salvation - Sin & Repentance

Confessing Christ as Lord: No Christianity Without It

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Part three of a three-part series. Read [part two](#).

Simply put, there is no Christianity without confession of the Lordship of Christ. Scripture tells of the manifold ways in which "Jesus is Lord" -- and it tells of the culmination of His lordship over the cosmos.

In two previous articles, we've quoted from a sermon by Martyn Lloyd-Jones in which he addresses this vital question from Romans 10:9-10. First of all, we saw what it does *not* mean to confess Christ as Lord. Second, we saw that the lordship of Jesus Christ is objective truth, and genuine confession of that truth is not optional for a Christian. As he continues, Dr. Lloyd-Jones gives an exposition of some of the Bible's key passages on the Lordship of Christ -- and the fact that there is no Christianity without confession of the Lordship of Christ.

[In New Testament times] false gospels were being written which were saying fantastic and inaccurate things while, ostensibly, teaching what was true about the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only that but the world's religions and philosophies were infiltrating the church. The result was that the believers were disturbed and confused and the message of the church to the world was becoming confused. So these documents which we call the New Testament were primarily written to correct that, to show that the apocryphal Gospels and other writings were false. They were misrepresenting the truth concerning our Lord and His great salvation, and must not be believed.

A classic example of this is the Gospel of John, who wrote in order to make certain to his readers, and to remind them, that Jesus is the Son of God, and

that "believing ye might have life through his name" [John 20:31]. Then in his First Epistle, he wrote to prove that our Lord was also truly man.

But of course the most wonderful statement about Christ is to be found in the Epistle to the Colossians, in the first chapter. That teaching was very important at the time, and it is equally so today. This idea that the New Testament is out of date is just sheer rubbish! What is the real problem in the Christian church today? I would say it is the Colossian heresy. False teachers had been going round saying, "Oh yes, Jesus was very wonderful; He is a great help in coming to God. But He is not the only one. There are all sorts of angels and supernatural powers that come between us and God and help us to get to Him ..."

Not only that, but they taught a kind of mysticism, exactly as is being taught today. There was, therefore, a danger that the people in Colosse could be in a great muddle with regard to the gospel which they believed. So the Apostle wrote to them. He begins by thanking God for their faith and love and refers to "the word of the truth of the gospel", implying that there are false gospels. In the second chapter he becomes quite specific, warning Christians against being misled. "Beware," he writes "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Now that is so relevant to the situation today. People are saying, "Well, of course, we are in the twentieth century and we are in the age of the splitting of the atom. We now think in scientific terms and categories. People no longer believe in the supernatural or the miraculous and even the whole notion of personality is vague. We must not speak like that any longer; we must restate the Christian faith in terms that modern men and women can follow."

But that is just philosophy. Let us remind ourselves that Paul states the truth about the Lord. He presents Him as the One "In whom we have redemption

through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" [Col. 1:14]. So who is He? He is "the image [the exact likeness] of the invisible God" „ÿ that is who Jesus is. You see, Christianity is all about this Person. It is not about that nice feeling you get; it is not about a sense of love, or kindness, or goodness; it is not your objection to the immorality of others and your desire to do good.

No, it is about this Person by whom "all things" were "created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers"; and for whom "all things were created". "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 fullness dwell" [Col. 1: 16-19].

What a statement! What does it mean? Before we come to its interpretation, I want you to carry in your minds a similar statement in the first three verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews. By the way, why was that letter ever written? Before you read a book of the Bible always ask the question: Why did the author ever write it? How can you find out? You can find out by reading what he wrote. Listen to him: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Then he goes on to show our Lord's superiority to the angels.

Why did he write this? In a way, he has already given you the answer by plunging straight into a statement about the Lord. He was writing to Hebrew

Christians, people who were beginning to become shaky in their faith. People had said to them, "You were fools. You left your old religion, the religion of your fathers which has stood the test of centuries, you left all that and believed this new teaching about this Jesus ..." And they were being shaken. So this man wrote to say, in effect, "Your whole trouble is due to the fact that you do not realize, as you should, who this Jesus is." So he makes his declaration at the beginning. He says: He is God's Son. He is, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person". That is precisely why he wrote his letter. Those Hebrew Christians were wondering whether Christianity was true. Why? Because they were not clear about the greatness of Jesus Christ. This is the great essential. There is no Christianity without Him.

Those, then, are the major New Testament statements; let me try to summarize them. We are told by the Apostle in Colossians 1:15 that He is "the firstborn of every creature" -- which means that He has the primacy over all created things. A better translation would be, "born before all created things". In other words, He was not created but was born before anything was created. He is the One who has priority over all creation. Now it must mean that, because Paul goes on to say in the sixteenth verse, "By him were all things created." He is the "firstborn" before all creation. He is the only One who is born of God; God's only begotten Son.

Then it is through Him that everything was created. We find that in the first chapter of John's Gospel where "The Word" implies priority and sovereignty. He existed before all created things, and everything was therefore created by Him and through Him.

And then there is that tremendous statement in the nineteenth verse of Colossians 1: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." The sum total of all the divine attributes and powers are in Him: "all the fullness".

You also find it in Colossians 2:9: "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." It is all there. Jesus is Lord! This Jesus! That is what we believe. This is the confession that we make with our mouth.

But, you notice, this lordship includes other things also. In His essence He is the eternal Son of God. But look at His relation to the universe. This helps you to understand His lordship: "By him were all things created ...". We find the same in John 1:3, and in Hebrews 1:2. And in Colossians 1:16 we read: "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." There is nothing in existence that was not created by Him -- not a single thing. "Without him was not any thing made that was made." And in the first chapter of Hebrews the writer is concerned to show that even the angels in all their glory are but created beings, created by Him. He is above them all and over them all; they are but His "ministering spirits".

And the Apostle puts it still more plainly in Colossians 1. He says: I do not care whether they are in heaven, whether they are on earth, whether they are visible or invisible, spiritual or material; thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, everything has been created by Him, and, still more interesting, "for him". We can put it like this: this universe, the whole cosmos, is the Father's gift to His only begotten Son. It was created for Him, for His pleasure, that He might be Lord over it all. "Jesus is Lord"!

But then there is this other statement, which is still a part of the definition of his lordship. "By him all things consist" [Col. 1:17], which means that He holds everything together. Now Hebrews 1:3 is a good commentary on this: "upholding all things by the word of his power." Here Paul uses the word consist, which is a most interesting term. It means that everything coheres, if you like, everything

hangs together. It is a way of expressing unity and solidarity. It indicates order and arrangement. What makes this universe a cosmos, rather than a chaos, is that the Lord Jesus Christ is holding it all together.

Now we notice the order and arrangement in nature, do we not? We see cause and effect. The astounding thing is that everything does hold together, and what we are told is that it is He who does it. If he stopped, everything would disintegrate. There would be an end, chaos. He -- Jesus, this Jesus of Nazareth -- He is Lord, and a part of His lordship is that He is the principal, as it were; it is His power that holds everything together.

And another word which we must use is this: He is the heir of all things. It is again found in Hebrews 1: God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things" [Heb. 1:2]. This is a part of His lordship. The heir is the one who will enter into an inheritance; well, He is the heir of the whole universe. Jesus is Lord! That means, remember, that this whole universe belongs to Him; the Father has given it to Him.

And the last thing is this „ÿ and it is something very special, it is an important aspect of His lordship „ÿ it is through Him and by Him that God is going to restore this whole cosmos to the condition in which it was originally, when God made it, and from which it has fallen as the result of sin. This is taught in Ephesians 1:9-10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself" -- then notice this -- "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." So whatever way you look at the universe and the cosmos, including men and women, it all speaks of the Lordship of Jesus. It is through Him and by means of Him that God will again "head up" everything in a great eternal unity.

The effect of sin has been disintegration, differences, quarrels, wars, bloodshed, rivalries, all that we see so plainly in this modern world. But God had made the universe perfect, it was paradise, there were none of these warring elements, everything was one, it was a glorious unity, and everything ministered to the glory of God. And the whole message of the gospel -- "the word of faith, which we preach" -- says primarily this: that God is going to restore again this great unity to the whole cosmos, and He has done it and He is going to do it finally and fully through this Person, Jesus, so that He is to be "the Lord" over all in this absolute sense. Then this glorified, unified cosmos He will hand back in its utter perfection to God the Father, who made it for Him and gave it to Him; and made it in Him and through Him.

What a subject! Jesus is Lord! That is what we believe, that is what we are here for, that is what we proclaim to the world. There is no Christianity apart from this.¹

References:

1. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 10 „Ÿ Saving Faith* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997), pages 94-99. Used by permission.

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