

ADRIAN ROGERS

# DISCOVER JESUS

THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER  
OF OUR FAITH



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*The Author and Finisher of Our Faith*

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# INTRODUCTION

*Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)*

Discoveries are being made almost daily in our world. New medicines. New technologies. New stars and planets. New ways to do things with more efficiency and precision. New truths and new ideas. Our society loves to discover new things.

To discover is to find, to gain knowledge of, to notice, or to realize. We don't just like to discover new things, but we also like to find new facets of old things. It's a joy to find a lost earring or a lost twenty-dollar bill. In addition, there is something wonderful about recovering an old friendship or noticing something in the Bible that we never noticed before.

This book is all about discovering the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps, you met Him as a young child. Your life has been spent getting to know Him more and more. It could be that you found Jesus as a teenager or young adult. You've also enjoying gaining more knowledge of Him through the years. A few of you may have met Jesus later in life. For you, each day is a new adventure with Him.

It may be that you are picking up this book because you are curious about Jesus. You have heard about Him, but you may not know Him personally. Our prayer is that your journey through these pages will lead you to find and meet the Jesus you will read about. He loves you and wants to have a real and personal relationship with you.

For all of you who will read these chapters, we pray that God will give you such a renewed love for the Lord Jesus. May your time in this book and in His Word compel you to know Him and to love Him more. Truly, may you discover Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

# WHO IS JESUS?

## COLOSSIANS 1:12-21

*“What’s the world coming to? It’s coming to Jesus.”  
—Adrian Rogers*

Some time ago, I watched a program hosted by Peter Jennings called, “The Search for Jesus.”<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, I watched for a while and then could not watch any longer. So, I turned the television off and walked out of the room.

Honestly, I would just as soon watch a group of men with bags over their heads in a cave with a jar full of lightning bugs try to find the noonday sun as watch these people talk about their search for Jesus. Nothing definitive was ever discovered on the show because they were looking in the wrong place. Jesus is there to be found if you want to find the authentic, real, genuine Son of God.

Several years back, Bryant Gumbel was interviewing Larry King on CNN. Gumbel asked Larry King this question: “If you could ask God only one question, Larry, what would it be?” Larry King said, “I would ask Him if He has a Son.”<sup>2</sup> Very interesting. Great question. And the answer: Yes. God does have a Son. And His name is Jesus.

Christian apologist John Blanchard has estimated that of all of the people who have ever lived since the dawn of civilization—

there have been about 60 billion people—only a handful have made any real, lasting impression and actually changed the world.<sup>3</sup> In addition, of that handful of people, there is only One who stands head and shoulders above all of the others, and His name is Jesus.

Also, more attention has been given to Jesus than to any other person in history. More devotion has been given to Him. More criticism has been given to Him. More adoration has been given to Him. More opposition has been given to Him. Every recorded word that He said has been sifted, analyzed, scrutinized, and debated more than all of the historians, philosophers, and scientists put together.

Yet, He lived over 2,000 years ago. And after 2,000 years, there is never one minute on this earth that millions are not studying what Jesus said. Think about it. Here's a person who lived in a tiny land two millennia ago, and yet His birth divides the centuries: BC and AD. "Before Christ" and "Anno Domini," are the years of our Lord.

Jesus never wrote a book and yet library after library could be filled with volumes about Him. Even more, multiplied millions of books have been written about the Lord Jesus. Although He never painted a picture, as we look around creation, we see His handiwork everywhere. Uniquely, the world's greatest art, drama, music, and literature has Jesus of Nazareth at its source.

As far as we know, Jesus never raised an army, yet multiplied millions have died for Him. He never traveled far from His birthplace, and yet His testimony has gone around the world. Jesus only had a handful of followers that were with Him in ministry, and yet over 30 percent of the world's population are Christians today. In fact, the largest religious group on earth follows Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Think about it...a public ministry of only three short years, and yet here we are, 2,000 years later, praising His wonderful name.

Likewise, Jesus had no formal education. He didn't attend a university or seminary, and yet thousands of universities and seminaries have been built in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In my humble, but correct, opinion, no one can call himself or herself educated who does not seek after Jesus Christ.

Historian Kenneth Scott LaTourette said, "Jesus has had more effect on the history of mankind than any other of its race

who ever existed.”<sup>5</sup> To explain Jesus Christ is impossible. To ignore Jesus Christ is disastrous. To reject Him is fatal. To know Him is to love Him. To love Him is to trust Him. To trust Him is to be radically, dramatically, and eternally changed.

Additionally, human speech is too limited to describe Him. In like manner, the human mind too small to comprehend Him, and the human heart can never really, completely, or totally absorb who Jesus Christ really is.

In Colossians 1:12, we read, “giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” In this verse, we are talking about our inheritance. If somebody wealthy left you or me a legacy, wouldn’t we be interested? Then pay attention to the next phrase: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love...” (Colossians 1:13).

The entire text reads like this:

...in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in 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 may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Colossians 1:15-20)

Jesus doesn’t just want a place in your life. He doesn’t wish for prominence in your life. Ultimately, He deserves and demands preeminence. The scripture says, “that in all things He may have the preeminence.” As you read today, consider three powerful reasons that Jesus deserves and demands preeminence in our lives.

## JESUS REVEALS THE FATHER

In Colossians 1:15, we discover that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. God is Spirit: invisible, unfathomable, unapproachable. How can we know God? Through Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God. The visible Jesus makes the invisible God known.

How are you going to know God? Not by reason. How are you going to know God? Not by religion. How are you going to know God? Not by ritual. You are only going to know God by revelation. Indeed, Jesus Christ has come to reveal God to you. You can never fully know God the Father apart from God the Son.

In Colossians 1:15, we read, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” Consider those two words, *image* and *first-born*. The word *image* is the Greek word *icon*. Likely you have a cell phone, and you have icons on your phone. An *icon* is a representation. In the same token, Jesus is the *icon* of God. The Greek word for *image* means “the exact representation.” Jesus is the express image of the invisible God. He is the icon of God.

If you read Colossians 2:9, you will discover how Paul sums it up, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” All of God was in Bethlehem’s babe. He is the icon, the express image of God. Do you want to know God? Jesus Christ has cornered the market. He has a monopoly on revealing the Father. This is the only way you’re going to know God, and it is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:27 shares what Jesus Christ Himself said, “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

Either that’s true or it’s not true. I believe it’s true. Jesus says, “Nobody knows My Father but Myself, and you can’t know Him unless I introduce Him to you.” That’s a big statement. Why? Because Jesus is the express image of God. You’re never going to figure God out. How can the finite understand the infinite? Not by reason, but by revelation. Any other god that you worship is the god of your guesses, and that’s a form of idolatry. You don’t conjure up some god in order to worship him.



This may sound narrow-minded. But we don't want to be so broad-minded our minds get thin in the middle. Nor do we want to be so open-minded our brains may fall out. For example, I want my doctor to be narrow-minded. I don't want him to say, "Well, you're sick. Here are ten bottles of medicine. Let's just take one of them and see what happens." Additionally, I want my airplane pilot to be narrow-minded and not try to land with the landing gear still up. Also, I want my banker to be narrow-minded and carefully account for my dollars.

So, why would I not want my theology and my eternal destiny to be narrow-minded? Truly, you can't know the Father apart from Jesus Christ. Jesus didn't say, "I'm A way;" He said, "I am THE way." He didn't say, "I am A life." He said, "I am THE life. I am the way, the truth, and the life." You see, God was manifest in the flesh.

My pastor friend Jerry Vines imagines Jesus Christ going into the temple and having a conversation with the teachers when he was a 12-year-old boy. As one of the learned doctors in the temple strokes his beard and says, "Son, how old are You?" "Well," He says, "on My mother's side, I'm 12 years old, but on My Father's side, I'm older than My mother and as old as My Father."<sup>6</sup>

You see, Jesus was both God and man. On His mother's side, He got thirsty; on His Father's side, He said, "I am the water of life." On His mother's side, He got hungry; on His Father's side, He took a little lad's lunch and fed 5,000. On His mother's side, He was homeless and didn't have a place to lay His head; but on His Father's side, He owned the cattle on a thousand hills. On His mother's side, He wept at the grave of Lazarus; on His Father's side, He said, "Lazarus, come forth," and raised him from the dead. He was God in human flesh.

Look at the word: *firstborn*, in Colossians 1:15. Don't get the idea that *firstborn* implies a beginning. Indeed, Jesus never had a beginning. In fact, He has always existed in a state, never a start. He didn't have His beginning at Bethlehem. There never was a time when Jesus did not exist. Regarding this, Jesus said in the Gospel of John, "Before Abraham was, I Am." He did not say, "I was." He said, "I Am." Jesus is the great I Am.

What does the word *firstborn* mean? The Jehovah's Witnesses tell us that there was a time when Jesus did not exist, that He was created.<sup>7</sup> Colossians 1:15 is one of the verses that they try to use for this argument. However, they mishandle the word *firstborn* altogether.

The word *firstborn* speaks of honor and privilege, as God said of David in Psalm 89:27, "Also I will make him *My* firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth." "And He," Jesus, "is before all things..." (Colossians 1:17). He could not be created. Why? Because all things were created by Him. It is obvious that whether there are things in Heaven or things on Earth, everything was made by Jesus and for Jesus.

Would you like to know God the Father? Would you like to know what our great God is like? Who He is? Would you like to know His heart? Friend, Jesus reveals the Father.

## JESUS RULES THE FUTURE

Not only does Jesus reveal the Father, He is also the image of the invisible God, the firstborn, the highest of all creation, and above all creation. Furthermore, Jesus rules the future; He rules the world and all of creation.

Look at Colossians 1:16-20 again:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in 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 may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Now what is this talking about? This passage is speaking about One who rules the universe. Indeed, Jesus not only has this whole world in His hands, but He has the past, the present, and the future in His hands. People ask, “What is the world coming to?” Answer, “It’s coming to Jesus.” It is coming to Jesus. “All things were created by Him and for Him,” and all will climax in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider a few additional points about this passage. First of all, Paul says that Jesus is the power of creation. In Colossians 1:16, we read, “For by Him were all things created.” The little baby in Matthew 1 is the mighty God of Genesis 1. There was nothing made without Him. John tells us, “All things were made by Him.”

Do you believe in evolution? Personally, I do not. Truly, I wouldn’t believe in evolution even if I weren’t a Christian. It’s the next best guess of those who do not know the Word of God. If evolution is true, you will definitely have problems with the Scripture. If the Bible can’t tell me from whence I have come, how can it tell me where I’m headed?

If you believe in evolution, you’ll also struggle with matters of salvation. If there’s no creation, no Adam and Eve, and no Garden of Eden, then there is no record about the fall of man and sin. Indeed, if there’s no fall into sin, there’s no need for a new birth.

Some people think man is just progressing onward and upward. But Jesus said in John 3, “You must be born again.” If Genesis 3 is a myth, John 3 is a farce. If you believe in evolution, you’re going to have problems in society, and that’s why we have so many. As we’ve often said, if you teach the boys and girls they come from animals, it ought not to surprise us that they begin to act like animals.

Do you think all of creation just happened? Do you think it’s just by some random chance? Did everything come out of some primordial ooze that came out of lifeless matter?

There’s an interesting book about evolution called *Darwin’s Black Box*. Scientist Michael Behe pried open Darwin’s Black Box and mentioned a concept called *irreducible complexity*. In summary, this concept teaches you to reduce life back until you can’t reduce it any smaller. And when you look at the simplest part, it is so complex that there’s no way possible that just one cell could have

come about by evolution. Truly, all of the components in that one cell are interdependent.<sup>8</sup>

In your own body, there are 10-50 trillion cells, all of them incredibly complex.<sup>9</sup> In just one cell in your body, you have rods known as *chromosomes*. And in these chromosomes, you have genes, or your genetic makeup. Your genetic makeup is determined by your DNA.<sup>10</sup> Scientists study DNA and say, “There’s a mind there. There’s intelligence there. There’s design there. There’s no randomness there.”

Even more, in just one cell, there is enough information that it would take six hundred thousand books to write down the code of the DNA that is in one of the trillions of cells in your body.<sup>11</sup> DNA determines your intellect, the color of your hair, and your personality. Who did all of this? Jesus. “All things were made by Him.” Jesus is the power of creation.

## JESUS IS THE PRESERVER OF CREATION

In Colossians 1:17, we read, “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” Do you know what the word *consist* means? Things that consist stick together. Jesus Christ is the glue of the galaxies. What is it that keeps it all from falling apart or coming apart? Jesus.

In the same fashion, Jesus is the One who feeds the sun with its fuel. Jesus is the One who guides the planets in their orbit around the sun. Likewise, Jesus is the One who has set out all of the stars. Some people talk about natural law. There’s no natural law. There are the laws of Jesus that nature obeys. It is by Jesus that all things consist.

Recently, I was looking at Isaiah 40:26: “Lift up your eyes on high, and see Who has created these *things*.” Have you ever looked up at the stars at night or the sun in the day? That’s what Isaiah tells us to do, “Lift up your eyes on high, and see Who has created these *things*.”

Do you think that everything came out of nothing? You may say, “I can’t believe in an eternal God.” Do you believe in eternal, inanimate matter? Isaiah 40 tells us about God, “Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power; not one is missing.”

One day, I was listening to the radio. During an advertisement, they suggested, “We’ll name a star after you. You choose somebody, and we will name a star for that person, and we’ll put it in a book.” Too late. Every one of the billions and billions of stars already has a name. Jesus has named each one of them. He is the preserver of creation. He guides it all.

Did you know that light travels at 182,282 miles per second? How fast is that? Let’s hijack a light beam and travel to the sun? The sun is 93 million miles away. You can be there in eight and a half minutes, traveling on a light beam. You want to go to the nearest star? It would take you four and a half years, traveling at 186,282 miles per second to get to the nearest star. That’s 27 trillion miles away. And that’s the closest one.<sup>12</sup>

In like manner, there are more than 100 billion stars in our galaxy. To go from side to side, rim to rim, in our galaxy would take you a 100 thousand light years, traveling at 186,282 miles per second.<sup>13</sup> Who did that? His name is Jesus. He’s the One by whom all things consist. He is the power of creation. And, He is the preserver of creation.

## JESUS IS THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Look again at Colossians 1:16: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Why was everything created? Do you think it is for you and me? No, it’s for the Lord Jesus Christ. *For* is a preposition that speaks of direction. It’s the Greek word “*Ἔνα*.” It means to be moving in the direction.<sup>14</sup>

Over the past few decades, we in America have been greatly influenced by Eastern religions. Eastern religions are circular, teaching that everything goes round and round. That’s the reason they believe in reincarnation. I’ve always thought reincarnation was putting the milk back in the can. In Eastern religions, you have to live with good karma. And if your karma is not good, then in your next life you may come back as a roach. But if you’ve been good,

you might come back as a cow. That's the reason they don't eat meat. You might be eating one of your relatives.<sup>15</sup>

However, the Bible teaches us that life is not all circular. The Bible is linear. We're moving to the time when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. That's the reason He taught us to pray in Matthew 6:10, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven."

Let me give you a verse my wife shared with me. It's Isaiah 33:22: "For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us." Jesus is Judge, Lawgiver, and King. What are the three parts of our government? The judiciary (the judge), the legislative (the lawgiver), and the executive (the king). Did you know Jesus is all three? He is the perfect balance of power. Indeed, He is the power. The LORD: He is the Judge, He is the Lawgiver, and He is the King.

Isaiah 33:22 goes on to say, "He will save us." Friend, it is all headed to Jesus. It was all and it is all for Him, for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the key to the mystery of history.

Not long ago, a young man was taking a philosophy course. He'd studied and studied and headed to class to take his final exam. On the exam, his philosophy professor showed a sense of humor and tested his students to see how well they could think. The final examination was just one word: *Why?* The student—the young man—thought for a while. Then he wrote one word down on his exam, and walked out. His answer: *Because.*

I would add two more words if given the same question of *Why?* Because of Jesus. He is the mystery of history. Why is it all made? "All things were created through Him and for Him." And history has a date with deity.

## JESUS RECONCILES THE FALLEN

Not only does Jesus reveal the Father and not only does Jesus rule the future, but Jesus also reconciles the fallen. That's why He came. Read Colossians 1:18-20 once again:

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all