

“Domine, volumus Jesum videre,” John 12:21.
“Credo, Domine; adjuva incredulitatem meam,” Mark 9:24.

Colossians 1 (EHV)

¹³The Father rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, ¹⁶for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and unseen, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and all things hold together in him.

¹⁸He is also the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that in all things he might have the highest rank. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile all things to himself (whether things on earth or in heaven) by making peace through the blood of his cross.

²¹At one time, you were alienated from God and hostile in your thinking as expressed through your evil deeds. ²²But now Christ reconciled you in his body of flesh through death, in order to present you holy, blameless, and faultless before him.



Today is the last Sunday of the church year, Christ the King Sunday. It is by faith in Jesus Christ alone that we crown Him King of kings and Lord of lords. We lay our sins before this King and ask Him to renew His reigning activity in our hearts.

But how is it that a king is what we want? So few nations still have monarchies today. There are 26 nations ruling over 43 countries—from figureheads in Britain, Sweden, and Japan to absolute power in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Vatican.

Today even in our brilliant government, when political forces mess with our routines, our income, our health care, our livelihood—when things change, I think we see the weaknesses of a constitutional representative republic.

Once upon a time, in America, there were loyalists to the crown. A good example is Mather Byles, the pastor at Hollis Street Church in Boston during the time of America’s Revolutionary War. He said, “Which is better—to be ruled by one tyrant 3,000 miles away, or to be ruled by 3,000 tyrants one mile away?” American revolutionaries placed Byles under house arrest, and he was never allowed to serve as a pastor again. Yet in our time, we can see that he at least had a point; today we have 500,000 estimated government officials. How many of them can we trust? Can we trust any of them?

So we wait for our King, a true ruler with absolute power that cannot be shared with men. If the church year were a sporting event, there would be no suspense as to who finishes in first place. It’s Jesus! So today we recognize Him as King.

But then why do we at times behave as ones who question His rule? Why do we at times forget to trust Him as our ruler? Historians tell us that “absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Even if the ruler is Jesus Christ, do you ever question ...

CAN ONE MAN BE ABOVE IT ALL?

The believers in Colosse didn't seem very sure that Jesus was fully God and full Redeemer. They worshiped angelic powers, and they looked for greater truth beyond the gospel. Paul wanted to write them and inform them what answers our question: It lies in what can be said of Jesus Christ, our King.

I. WHAT CAN BE SAID OF GOD CAN BE SAID OF THIS MAN

(This is true without mixing the natures of God and man; we still allow what is distinctive to the divine nature.) What can be said of God can be said of this man. ¹⁵*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."* If God the Father viewed Himself in a mirror, the image would look like the Son of God. John says that *"no one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known"* (John 1:18). And Jesus says very simply, *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

¹⁵*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."* Is it puzzling to hear Jesus called the "firstborn" of all creation? Long ago, some false teachers in the church used this passage to suggest that Jesus is a lesser being than God the Father; that is, a creature, and that "there once was a time when Jesus was not." They were opposed by many good, honest preachers in the church, who stated that this word "firstborn" simply means that Jesus is the Son. No Bible believer denies that Jesus is the Son. Further, if the Son were not begotten of the Father from eternity, this passage would be false! So the Son was not created out of nothing. He was unlike every creature.

You don't have to go too far in the sermon text to learn that fact, that the Son was uncreated, and maximally involved, in the six-day creation. ¹⁶*"For in Him ...*

- > *All things were created, in heaven and on earth ...*
- > *All things have been created through Him and for Him.*
- > ¹⁷*He is before all things, and*
- > *All things hold together in Him."*

It would be difficult to make Jesus Christ, the Son of God, less-than-equal to the Father or the Holy Spirit, based on these very clear words. Since time as we know it began with creation; then certainly "there was never a time when the Son of God was not."

This agrees with the rest of Scripture.

- > John says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God ... the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us"* (John 1:1,14).
- > Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17, "Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (v. 5).
- > Psalm 89:27 speaks about the Holy One, *"I will make Him my firstborn, greatest of the kings of the earth."*
- > And Jesus says very simply, *"I and the Father are one"* (John 10:30).

So you see that Jesus doesn't claim to be a lesser being, as if God had bestowed power on Him. Nor does Paul make it sound as if Jesus had a message from God to make a claim on the throne. No, Jesus is and remains the uncreated Creator. All the fulness of the divinity dwells in Him. The divine nature powerfully manifests its majesty in the assumed human nature of Jesus.

This is very good news! When in our days of weariness and weakness, we may wonder if we can possibly hold it together. Our parents may be in the pain and infirmities of old age, and we cannot seem to keep their health problems all on one page. Our marriage may be crumbling because of personality changes, and we cannot seem to keep it together in how we act and talk to each other. Our children may be growing up and resentful about our parenting, and we cannot seem to keep our family together as one unit. Our hearts may be crushed because of the last relationship we attempted. Our country may seem like a shambles, as if all *thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities* were against us. Even our own personal consciences afflict us nearly to death for our sins.

But our King, Jesus Christ, has it all together. He is above all these things. In this kingdom of His, we have no need to worry anymore.

In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In Him are not just all of the solutions to our problems, but all that the whole world faces. It is no wonder that we question whether absolute power could corrupt Him, because it would be a valid question if He were, in fact, a sinner. But He is true God, and by Him is the definition of goodness and love. We need His Holy Spirit to quiet our hostile minds of sin. We need powerful reminders that He can keep it all together. Today, His Spirit informs us that if Jesus Christ the King were to desist from keeping it all together, no law or theory of physics or space or time would follow in its course. He is not only Creator but Sustainer. You can depend on Jesus, your King.

And it gets better.

II. WHAT CAN BE SAID OF MORTAL MAN CAN BE SAID OF JESUS CHRIST

If there is anyone who may suggest that Jesus Christ is a power-hungry God, as if it were possible He is a corrupt ruler who only wants to control you, think about this: Do you notice how, despite all of His power and majesty and authority, God chose a different way to make peace, to redeem, and to reconcile? He chose something else to save. What was that?

Yes, Jesus took first place. Yes, Jesus gained the victory. Yes, Jesus claims authority to rule. Yet the way Jesus Christ our King takes first place was by doing something God could never do. Jesus Christ *“made peace through His blood on the cross.”* He *“reconciled you in His body of flesh through death.”* This means this King had a body and let it be bruised, battered, and unbandaged for us on an instrument of death. You cannot say this of each transcendent God. This thought of God seriously conflicts with many images of creators out there.

And going first in the way that our King went first is what hardly any king would do for his subjects.

Sometimes it is only sheer love that drives a person to go first, ahead of us. It may be impolite to go first, except when going first is dangerous. But Jesus the King of kings faced your dangers for you. He carried the guilt of your sin for you. He reigned for Himself not just a kingdom of power but one of grace. His heart beat and bled for you, so that He might rule in your heart. He’s your King so you might have one mortal man—and just one, since only one is without sin—in whom to place your trust.

The divine nature actually exerts its majesty through the human nature of Jesus Christ. His human nature has such majesty because the entire fullness of the Godhead dwells personally in the assumed flesh and blood of Christ. Yes, we speak of things too wonderful to know. However, God has also done things too wonderful for us to speak.

If He hadn’t: we would have been alienated from Him forever; stuck in our own corrupt passions and desires; attempting to establish our own rule; and miserable failures.

So this King is King of kings—your King of Kings. Jesus Christ is your King because He has gone first for you. With His own body, He has faced dangers known and unknown to translate you out of your sinful life. With His own blood and sweat, He came to transfer you into His kingdom. With His own tears, your King ushered your heart out of earthly dependence.

Finally, Jesus is called *“firstborn”* in another way. While all the world waited: He wasn’t the first human born after sin; He wasn’t the second man born; He wasn’t even the 100th man born. But to prove that Jesus saves, God raised Jesus Christ first from the dead. That is, His resurrection is the source of all resurrections. He did this to show you the kind of kingdom you can claim by faith alone: when 1 tyrant doesn’t do it for you 3,000 miles away; when 3,000 tyrants don’t do it for you 1 mile away; when 500,000 representatives in a constitutional republic aren’t doing it for you; you are a citizen of a kingdom beyond this life and into the next.

Yes, He can be above it all. He is above it all. He is King. In Jesus’ name, Amen.
