

**Slide 1**

# **They Called Him Jesus**

## **COLOSSIANS 1:15-20**

### **Introduction**

1. This week, on December 25<sup>th</sup>, many of you will gather with family in one of your homes to enjoy a good meal and the giving and receiving of presents.
2. Christmas was first celebrated in Rome in the year 354 A.D.
3. Constantinople would follow 25 years later in 379 A.D. and then Antioch nine years after them in 388 A.D.
4. While we do not know exactly when Jesus was born to Joseph and Mary there in Bethlehem, it is the fact that He was born that makes all the difference.
5. Luke tells us in chapter two of his gospel account that the birth of God's Son took place in a manger, a place where the animals were kept — and that after wrapping her newborn son in those swaddling cloths, she laid him in a manger.
6. Do you realize that this humble birth is the most widely known event on the face of the earth.
7. When we speak of a specific year in history, we typically refer to it as B.C. (Before Christ) or A.D. ("Anno Domini" — "in the year of the Lord").
8. No other child who has ever been born or ever will be born throughout all time will be as significant to the human race as Jesus of Nazareth.

**Slide 2**

9. The angel of the Lord who appeared to Joseph told him, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).
  - a. "Jesus" is the Greek transliteration for the Hebrew name "Joshua".
  - b. Both names mean "God is salvation."
10. Seven hundred years before his birth, the prophet Isaiah had said, "They shall

call His name Immanuel” (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14) which means “God with us.”

11. In the birth of Jesus, you and I have a Savior who is none other than God in human form.
12. God’s Word stands as a witness to the uniqueness of His Son.

**Slide 3**

## **I. The Witness of Scripture**

### **A. THE TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH**

1. With the birth of Jesus, God entered our sin-polluted world, but was not tainted by its sins.
2. He took upon Himself our guilt, He bore our griefs, He carried our sorrows.
  - a. “He was pierced through for our transgressions” (Isaiah 53:5a, NASB95).
  - b. “He was crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5b, NASB95).
  - c. “He was raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25, ESV).
  - d. He now “lives to make intercession” for us (Hebrews 7:25, NASB95).
  - e. He will come again to take those of us who are His home to live with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

**Slide 4**

### **B. THE DECLARATION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL**

1. No one else has ever been like Him, no one ever will.
2. As we saw earlier in Paul’s letter to the saints in Colosse, no one else . . .
  - a. Is the image of the invisible God (v. 15a).
  - b. Is the first-born of all creation (v. 15b).
  - c. Is the creator of all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible (v. 16).

- d. Is before all things and holds all things together (v. 17).
- e. Is the head of the church (v. 18).
- f. Has the fullness of deity dwelling in Him (v. 19).

**Slide 5**

**C. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN**

1. In Revelation 5, tells us of a vision he has in which he is carried into the very throne room of heaven.
2. There, he sees God seated on a throne.
3. In his hand is a scroll which represents the destiny of all mankind.
4. A strong angel suddenly calls out, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?” (Revelation 5:2)
5. As John looks on all heaven and earth are scanned for someone who is worthy.
6. John begins to weep because no one is found who is worthy to open the book (v. 4).
7. He is told to stop weeping because “the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah . . . has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals” (v. 5).
8. Suddenly, he sees a Lamb who comes forth and takes the book from the Father’s hand.
9. It is none other than Jesus Christ — in all creation, He alone is worthy.

**Slide 6**

## **II. Jesus’ Relation To God**

**A. HE IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD**

1. The writer of the letter we know as Hebrews states that Jesus is “the radiance of His [God’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature”

(Hebrews 1:3).

2. The apostle John, in the beginning of his gospel, wrote “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

**Slide 7**

3. If God were a man, we would expect Him to . . .

- a. Be sinless

- 1) He “has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
- 2) Pilate came to this conclusion: “I find no fault with this man” (Luke 23:4).
- 3) Even the thief on the cross: “this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:41).

**7a**

- b. Perform miracles

- 1) The disciples of John the Baptist went back and told him, concerning Jesus, “the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear” (Matthew 11:5).
- 2) He fed thousands on two separate occasions with just a few pieces of bread and fish.
- 3) He calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee with the simple words, “Hush, be still” (Mark 4:39).

**7b**

- c. Know the future

- 1) He foretold things about Himself (Matthew 17:22–23; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44).

“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.”

(Matthew 17:22–23)

- 2) He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Luke 19:43–44; cf. Matthew 24:2)

“For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:43–44)

7c

- d. Speak the most profound words ever spoken

- 1) Following his teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum at the beginning of his ministry, Mark tells us that the people “were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22).
- 2) Those in His hometown of Nazareth asked, “Where did this man get this wisdom” (Matthew 13:54).
- 3) The apostle John tells us that when the officers sent to arrest Jesus returned empty handed, the chief priests and Pharisees asked them why they did not arrest Him.
- 4) They responded, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks” (John 7:46).

7d

- e. Show us what God is like

- 1) The apostle John in the prologue to his gospel wrote, “No one has

seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” (John 1:18)

- 2) In the upper room, on the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples, “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him” (John 14:7).
- 3) Philip said to Him, “Lord show us the Father, and it is enough for us” (John 14:8).
- 4) Jesus responded, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9, NASB95)
- 5) In Jesus we see love, kindness, mercy and grace beyond which any of us are fully capable.
- 6) In Him there is a level of virtue, fairness and wisdom, unlike anything the world has ever seen.

**Slide 8**

**B. HE IS THE “FIRSTBORN” OF ALL CREATION**

1. When Paul states that Jesus was “the firstborn of all creation,” he isn’t saying that he was the first person born in creation.
2. This distinction belongs to Adam (Genesis 2:7).
3. What Paul means is that in all of Creation, Jesus is the *prototokos*, the ‘superior one,’ the one who is ‘first in rank’.
4. In the Old Testament, the term first-born was used in two ways:
  - a. Literally
    - 1) That child who was born first to a set of parents.
    - 2) I.e., Cain was Adam’s firstborn, Reuben was Jacob’s firstborn.
  - b. Figuratively
    - 1) The supreme one, superior one.

- 2) The one who whom privilege, prestige and honor are given.
- 3) God refers to several in the O.T. as His firstborn:

- a) Jacob (Israel) (*Exodus 4:22*)

“Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is My son, My firstborn.”’ (*Exodus 4:22*)

- b) David (*Psalms 89:27*)

“I also shall make him [David] My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” (*Psalms 89:27*)

- c) Ephraim (*Jeremiah 31:9*)

“I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.” (*Jeremiah 31:9*)

**Slide 9**

### **III. Jesus’ Relationship To The Universe**

#### **A. HE IS ITS CREATOR**

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible . . .” (*Colossians 1:16a*).

1. Hebrews 1:2 tells us that it was through His Son that God “made the world.”
2. The apostle John, in the beginning of his gospel, wrote “All things came into being through Him, and from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (*John 1:3*).
3. The whole material universe is the result of His creative power:
  - a. Our sun will hold 1.3 million earths and 64.3 million moons.
  - b. However, compared to the star Stephenson 2-18, our sun is a grain of sand. Stephenson 2-18 is approximately 2,150 times the size of our

sun.

- c. The moon averages a distance of almost 239,000 miles from the earth. (If you could drive to the moon at 70 miles per hour it would take you almost 5 months, if you drove non-stop).
- d. Our moon is approximately 93 million miles from the Sun and yet light travels that distance in 8.3 minutes.

#### Slide 10

### **B. HE IS ITS SUSTAINER**

“He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (*Colossians 1:17*).

- 1. The writer of Hebrews tells us that He “upholds all things by the word of His power” (*Hebrews 1:3*).
- 2. He is the cohesive force, the “glue” that holds everything together.
- 3. Without the delicate balance which He brings about through “the word of His power,” our universe would be far different.
  - a. If the Earth’s rotation slowed down, scorching days and freezing nights would become the norm.
  - b. If the Earth were closer to the Sun, we would experience a rise in our average daily temperatures, higher sea levels, ultimately making our planet inhabitable.
  - c. If the tilt of our earth’s axis were to shift, our seasons would be drastically altered, affecting temperatures, precipitation patterns, and agriculture.
- 4. That child born in a manger in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago is the beginning of creation, the end of creation, the upholder of creation and the goal of creation.

#### Slide 11

## **IV. Jesus’ Relationship To The Unseen Realm**

## **A. HE IS OVER ALL**

“For by Him all things were created . . . whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him”  
(Colossians 1:16).

1. Who are these “thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities” of which Paul speaks?
2. They are the “principalities and powers in the heavenly places” of which Paul writes in Ephesians 3:10.
3. They are the “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).
4. Paul wants us to know that the highest of angels, like the rest of creation, are also subject to Christ as the One in whom, through whom and for whom they were created.
5. God “has put all things in subjection under His feet” (Psalm 8:6; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:22; Hebrews 2:8).

### **Slide 12**

## **B. THE ANGELS WORSHIP HIM**

1. This is why, upon the angel’s announcement of our Savior’s birth to the shepherds in the field outside Bethlehem, there suddenly “appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,  
  
“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:13,14).
2. This is why the writer of Hebrews quotes the psalmist who says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him” (Hebrews 1:6; cf. Psalm 97:7).

### **Slide 13**

## **IV. Jesus’ Relationship To The Church**

## **A. HE IS ITS SOURCE**

1. After Peter declared Jesus to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), there in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus declared, “upon this rock, I will build My church” (Matthew 16:18).
2. The church is His creation.
3. He is its beginning.
4. Through His death, burial and resurrection, He made it possible.

### **Slide 14**

## **B. HE IS ITS HEAD**

“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”  
(Colossians 1:18, NASB95)

1. Not only is Jesus, “the firstborn of all creation” (v. 15), He is also “the firstborn from the dead” (v. 18).
2. Paul isn’t telling us that Jesus is the first person ever resurrected.
3. In the Old Testament, at least three people were raised from the dead:
  - a. The son of the widow in Zarephath was raised by God through the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24).
  - b. The Shunammite woman’s son, through the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37).
  - c. The man whose body touched Elisha’s bones (2 Kings 13:20-21).
4. In the New Testament, Jesus raised . . .
  - a. Jairus’s Daughter (Matthew 9, Mark 5, Luke 8)
  - b. The son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7)

- c. Lazarus of Bethany (John 11)
- 5. Jesus is the first in rank of all those raised from the dead.
- 6. With His resurrection you and I have assurance of our own resurrection on the last day.

## Conclusion

### Slide 15

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB95)

- 1. This week as so many look to the birth of the child, Jesus, born to the virgin, Mary, in the city of Bethlehem, I encourage you to focus upon who this child was and is.
- 2. He is the only-begotten Son of God who came into the world to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
- 3. He was “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
- 4. He was God in human form.
- 5. He is our Creator and Sustainer.
- 6. He is our Savior and our King.
- 7. Unless you and I believe these things, we will be lost in our sins.
- 8. It is vital that we turn from our sins and come to Him in obedient faith.
- 9. Without Him we have no hope in this life or beyond.
- 10. Will you come to Jesus today?