

# "The King of Christmas"

**Text: Colossians 1:15-20**

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on Sunday, December 22, 2019, by Lucas Goltz

## INTRODUCTION

Adolph Menzel is considered by many to be the most important German painter of his time  
He specialized in Prussian art and produced magnificent paintings  
Mostly celebrating the people and places of Berlin  
There is a painting of his that hangs in a Berlin art gallery  
It is supposed to be a painting of King Frederick the Great  
A brilliant military king  
Addressing his generals before an important war  
Under King Frederick Prussia grew to be the supreme military power of Europe  
The problem with the painting is that it's only partially finished  
As you can see, his generals are there, eyes fixed on a central figure  
In the background soldiers wait for orders  
But where the king should be – only blank canvas  
The king is missing from the painting  
Supposedly, Menzel died before he could finish it  
And put the king in his central place  
Maybe he simply forgot the king  
Got distracted by other things in his life  
Either way, the king has been left out of the picture

Christmas gives us an opportunity like no other time of the year

To fix our eyes on king Jesus

Recall the Christmas story, the angel Gabriel saying to Mary **..you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom there will be no end."**

Yet there are things that distract us

Things that distort our understanding of the king

Many times he just gets left out of the picture altogether

While Christmas offers us a great reminder

There is also much that is a part of Christmas today that clouds our minds

And draws our eyes away to other things

So that we don't do what we should be doing..

Bowing down before God in worship

But how do we ensure that the king is at the centre and that we are bowing before him?

This is what our text is about

The Colossian church was dealing with the same problem

As the apostle Paul writes from his Roman imprisonment

He wonders how to address the bad news he hears about their situation

Epaphras, a fellow worker and likely disciple of Paul's, brings news that the church has been infiltrated by corrupt leaders who are trying to lead people astray

There were the Jewish leaders and the Gentile pagan leaders

They were removing Jesus from the picture or distorting what he looks like

So, Paul pens one of the greatest letters in the history of the world

Urging the believers to reject the corrupt leaders and their lies  
Embrace Jesus as the King of their lives

To accomplish this  
Paul pens his great letter about Jesus  
Adding this hymn in Col 1:15-20  
A hymn meant to inspire praise and adoration  
Inspire worship of Jesus  
That boldly proclaims the supremacy of Jesus  
Jesus the King of Kings  
The King of Christmas  
My prayer is that it does that today for us  
Inspires worship  
And this is our purpose this Christmas

### **We must bow before Jesus, because He is the King of Christmas**

To help us put king Jesus at the center of the picture  
The center of our lives, individually and as a community  
I want us to look at 4 things

**So, we must bow before Jesus,**  
First, because He is **God**  
second, because He is **Creator**  
third, because He is Lord of the **Church**  
And last, because He is our **Rescuer**

1. We must bow before Jesus because He is God

Text: **He is the image of the invisible God**

First, who is he?  
We have to go back a few verses  
In vs 13 we see that He is the beloved Son of the Father, whose kingdom the Colossian believers have been brought into  
They were in the domain of darkness but now find themselves in the kingdom of the Son

The Son is the image  
He is the precise copy of God  
The icon that shows us the invisible God, the Father of heaven  
Hebrews 1:3 says **“the Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being”**  
He represents him accurately in every way  
He is also the firstborn  
Not first created being  
The firstborn declares his rank, his superiority over all things  
Psalm 89 says, **“I will make him my firstborn son, the mightiest king on earth.”**  
The Son is the matchless King  
Nothing came before him and nothing compares to him

So, if the Son images the Father perfectly  
And if he has supremacy over all things  
Jesus, the Son is God

It is the deity of Jesus Christ that sets the tone for this hymn  
That is why he can be called the firstborn, the supreme One  
And why he can be the image, true copy of the Father  
This is why Jesus said in John 14 to doubting Thomas  
**“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”**

Like a photograph in full color  
Jesus makes God known  
Because he is God

And, He is the God who simply is  
Self-existent and having all life in himself  
Giving all breath and life to his creatures  
Completely independent  
Not lacking anything  
Having no beginning and no end  
All of existence – the heavens and the earth - coming from him

He is the God who is pure light  
The God who **“dwells in unapproachable light”**  
Its this light that casts out darkness  
He is perfect  
There is no flaw or weakness in him  
His law and love, character and conduct are faultless  
He is the God who is Holy  
Who is majestic and morally pure  
Holiness is God’s crown

God is great  
This speaks to his magnitude  
And his Sovereignty over all things  
And also to the greatness of his affections toward us  
His great grace, great mercy, great patience,  
Great love toward us

Jesus makes this God.. approachable

It doesn’t matter who you are or where you have come from  
The God of the universe has made himself known to you  
We can see what was previously unseen  
We can approach because he has revealed himself to us

So, come  
Come near to the King  
Jesus said, **“whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”**  
And James says, **“Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.”**  
This is where worship starts  
Approaching him  
So, come before the king’s throne  
Like the shepherds in the field, come see your King  
Leave behind whatever hinders you from coming  
The God of the universe has made himself known and approachable  
So, come

2. We should bow before Jesus because He is Creator

**Text: 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. And he is before all things and in him all things hold together.**

Notice what this passage tells us about Jesus

### **First - Jesus is the architect**

#### **“For by him all things were created”**

He is the One who brought everything we see into existence

All the beauty and design that we see in the cosmos and our world

It was his idea

Jesus planned and designed it

Sam Storms wrote, *“Jesus is the one in whose eternal mind the blueprints for every nook and cranny of the cosmos were conceived.”*

### **Next it says - Jesus is supreme**

#### **“in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities”**

Jesus is not simply one of many gods

Jesus is the Creator who reigns supremely

Whatever thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities meant

There are no competition in the heavens

All bow down before the supremacy of Jesus

### **Next it says - Jesus is the purpose**

#### **“..all things were created through him and for him”**

When we hear that Jesus is the reason for the season

While cliché it is also fundamentally true – Jesus is the reason for Christmas

And he is the reason for everything else in all history

This is why Paul will later say in chapter 3

#### **Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ**

Why do everything for Jesus?

Because everything is for Jesus

Jesus is the King at the center of everything

### **Lastly - Jesus is the sustainer**

If all that weren't enough to claim his supremacy over all creation

Jesus is the One who holds it all together

He sustains it

The laws of nature and reason

Gravity and galaxies

The oceans tides and the sun's rays

All of it is created and sustained by Jesus

What power our King has!

It was this that turned my bestfriend's life around

Joe met Christians who showed genuine love and care for him

Shared the gospel with him and invited him into their homes

One night while starrng up at the stars, his new friends and him talked about the vastness of the universe

And how its Jesus that created and holds it all together

Joe struggled to believe he needed or wanted Jesus up until that moment

But upon contemplating the immense authority of Jesus over everything  
He was left awestruck at Jesus' supremacy

And this is what our response should be today  
This picture of the cosmic Jesus who created all things  
This beckons us to stand in awe of him  
To behold him  
This is what follows our last application of drawing near  
We must now behold this King  
Contemplate, be amazed and awestruck  
What power!  
What beauty!  
What a great King!

3. We should bow before Jesus because He is the Lord of the Church

Text: **And he is the head of the body, the church.**

First, let's talk about what the body is  
This is the assembly of God's people  
The worldwide entity known as the Church  
If you are a member of this church, you are a part of the small 'c' church  
If God has brought you into his family  
You are also part of the large 'C' Church that is scattered across the world and time

Jesus is the head of that body  
This simply means that Jesus is Lord of his people  
Using Menzel's painting, Jesus is the King and we are his generals and soldiers  
As King, he rules and provides for his people  
This is for our good  
It is not good for us to try and rule our own lives  
Or go looking for provision elsewhere  
The Colossians were tempted to do this  
Whether it be by the legalistic righteousness or the pagan spiritualism  
Both paths denied the all-sufficiency of Jesus

Everything we need we find in Jesus  
Direction? He will guide us  
Wisdom? He gives generously  
Protection? Jesus is a fortress  
As Lord, he also sends  
Again, remember Menzel's painting of the King giving orders to his generals  
What are our orders?

**“All authority in heaven and earth have been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”**

**Matt 28:19-20**

The King's orders are to bring his kingdom wherever we go  
Share the gospel with others, call them to faith in Jesus  
and teach them how to follow the King  
This is the great mission our King has called us to  
Partnering with him to build his kingdom one person at a time  
This is worship

James K.A. Smith wrote:

*“If the church is going to be a benefit to the [world], this will only be because it is centred on the supremacy of Christ. The moment we stop looking up at the ascended Lord and focus only on the horizontal, we lose our way.”*

Maybe you feel like you've lost your way  
Distracted by objects on the horizontal  
Not that which is vertical – Jesus  
So remember, first we talked about drawing near to God  
Then, beholding him in awestruck wonder  
Now, we bend our knee  
We lay down our rights  
We lay down our desires and dreams  
Everything on the horizontal that keeps us from worshipping our King  
We place that all aside  
Bend our knee at the foot of his throne  
He is the only One worthy of our allegiance  
Have you bent your knee?

#### **4. We must bow before Jesus because He is the Rescuer**

**Text: He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Look how Paul describes Jesus as the Rescuer

First, as the Incarnate

vs. 19 - **“In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell”**

The invisible God invaded our world in the form of a man  
John 1:14 - **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**  
God became incarnate, which simply means in-fleshed  
Listen to this:

*The glory of the incarnation is that it presents to our adoring gaze not a humanized God or a deified man, but a true God-man – one who is all that God is and at the same time all that man is: one on whose almighty arm we can rest, and to whose human sympathy we can appeal. We cannot afford to lose either the God in the man or the man in the God. Our hearts cry out for the complete God-man whom the scriptures offer us – Benjamin Warfield*

It was God's pleasure to enter our messy world  
To rescue us  
He didn't do this begrudgingly  
His great love moved him to do so

Next, Paul describes Jesus as the Crucified

vs 20 - **And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross**

What does the cross have to do with Christmas?  
Everything  
It's the story about the holy God who made us to reflect his glory to creation  
Who breathed life into us and gave us responsibility as stewards over his creation  
But we wanted to be our own kings, sitting on our own thrones

We chose to disobey God's design – reject and rebel against him  
Because of our rebellion, God exiled us from his kingdom  
And since that original moment of sin  
We have set ourselves against God, against his kingdom  
But God had a plan  
Remember, he always promised to send a Rescuer  
A king who would come and make everything right  
Bring peace – wholeness, to all that was broken and separated  
And he would do it by laying down his life  
Allowing his blood to be shed in the place of others  
So that what rebels couldn't do for themselves  
Make themselves right with God  
The promised King would do  
Becoming the substitute for rebel sinners  
Paul writes elsewhere that for **“our sake God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin so that in Jesus we might become righteous in our standing before God”**  
Jesus' perfect righteousness for our sin – this is the greatest exchange  
For those in relationship with Jesus, your standing before God is perfect  
You aren't perfect, your standing is perfect  
There's no more hostility, no more war between God and you  
You didn't accomplish or earn it  
It's by grace and grace alone  
Jesus did that  
He is the One who brings peace  
John 16:33 – I **have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.**

Lastly, Paul describes Jesus as the Crowned  
Vs 18 – **He is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent**

Here the beginning is the beginning of a new humanity  
Jesus accomplishes this through his resurrection  
Fulfilling his promise to lay down his life and rise again  
Like the incarnation and cross before it, the resurrection is nearly incomprehensible to us  
And yet it is the very thing we celebrate every Sunday  
Jesus has risen, the tomb is empty  
Our enemies - sin, death and Satan – all defeated  
Jesus' claims about himself as God and King - vindicated  
His rising from the dead proved his sacrifice was worthy  
Its the receipt that says “paid in full”  
And proves Jesus' dying words on the cross  
“it is finished”  
Jesus, the King, has rescued his people

Our response is simple but weighty  
We must repent and believe  
Jesus' first words in Mark's gospel are helpful for us here  
**“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the gospel”**  
It doesn't matter who you are  
If you are a Christian or not  
The King calls you to repentance today  
To turn away from your sin  
Your unbelief

unforgiveness  
selfishness  
pride  
and the false gods you give worship to  
And trust in him alone to rescue you  
Yes, you need rescuing from your sin  
To need to be brought out of darkness and into the kingdom of light  
You can trust this King  
The King of heaven that came wrapped in our flesh  
The King who went to the cross and bled and died for sin  
The King who defeated death and rose again to life  
This is the King of Christmas that we all must bow in worship to  
He is worthy of it  
Come, behold him  
Bend your knee before his throne  
And Repent and believe

**Conclusion:**

There are many distractions this Christmas season  
Things in our lives that will keep Jesus from being central  
Don't make the mistake of leaving the King out of the picture  
Receive the King's peace offering  
And give him the worship due to a king  
We must bow before him,  
because He is God  
He is Creator  
He is Lord  
And because He is our Rescuer