

Series: *Colossians – Christ Above All*

Title: "Stand Up! I'm Also a Man"

Speaker: Rev. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/22/2009

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Introduction

We're continuing our study of the Apostle Paul's great, divinely-inspired declaration about Jesus Christ in Colossians chapter one, verse fifteen: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." I believe this may be the most content-packed verse in the entire Word of God. It is certainly one of the most important in all of Scripture. It is vital that we understand that Jesus Christ is nothing less, and no one less, than God Himself.

If Jesus Christ is anyone less than God Himself, we have no Savior from sin. If Jesus Christ is anyone less than God Himself, we have no hope of a future resurrection. If Jesus Christ is anyone less than God Himself, then the Bible's promise of eternal life to the believer is the greatest fraud and falsehood the world has ever known.

But Jesus Christ is, as the old theologians used to put it, "very God of very God." God Himself. Nothing, and no, one less than that. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the only Savior from sin and eternal judgment in the fires of Hell. He is our hope and guarantee of a future glorious resurrection. He the One who is preparing an eternal dwelling place for His people. He Himself is the hope and promise of eternal life for every believer. And it is all because He is, as Paul says it here, "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn" – the eternally pre-eminent One – "over all creation."

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And using Colossians 1:15 as our jumping-off point, we've been looking at many other passages that deal with the preeminence of Christ. Our focus has been to equip you to answer the question, "How do I know that Jesus Christ is God?" My desire is that that truth would sink down and become rooted deeply within your heart. And my desire is also is for you to be prepared to give a Biblical answer, to answer with Biblical authority, when someone asks you that question. There is a lot of error being taught about the Lord Jesus Christ, even in Evangelical churches today. We need to be grounded in Biblical truth.

In past messages, we spent considerable time looking at the doctrine of the Trinity, and the place of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, within the Godhead. In our last message, we looked at the divine attributes of Christ – the fact that Jesus Christ has attributes and abilities that only God can have.

Jesus Christ is to be Worshipped

Today we come to our next point in this study. The next part of the answer to the question, "How do you know that Jesus Christ is God?" Our next point is the fact that the Bible says that Jesus Christ is to be worshipped. Jesus Christ is to be worshipped. And the Bible says that only God is to be worshipped. This is yet another Biblical proof that Jesus Christ is God Himself. And under this heading, that the Bible says that Jesus Christ is to be worshipped as God, I want to give you five propositional statements from Scripture. And as I usually do, let me give them all to you first, and then we'll come back and go into detail on each one.

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1. No mere man – no mere human being – is to be worshipped
2. Satan is not to be worshipped.
3. Angels are not to be worshipped.
4. No false god is to be worshipped.
5. Only the one true and living God is to be worshipped, and Jesus said that He is to be worshipped just as God the Father is to be worshipped.

So now let's focus on each of these points.

1. No Mere Man Is To Be Worshipped

First of all, the Bible teaches us that no mere man is to be worshipped. We find this principle in action in Acts chapter ten, beginning at verse 25. Peter had been directed by the Lord to go to the house of Cornelius and preach the Gospel to Cornelius and those who were gathered in his house with him. And in verse 25 we read that, "As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." In other words, don't bow down before me. Don't worship me. I am not to be worshipped. I'm here to tell you about the One who is to be worshipped.

I don't think it's any accident that God gave us this example by using Peter – the man that the Vatican claims was the first Roman Catholic Pope. Through the centuries, and to this very day, Roman Catholics bow before their pope and kiss his

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ring as though he were a deity. But Peter made no such claim for himself. He told Cornelius, "Get up, I myself am also a man." Don't worship me. Don't bow down before me. Let me tell you about the One who is worthy of all worship, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But contrary to the example of Peter himself, the false religion of Roman Catholicism calls the Pope of Rome, "the Vicar of Christ." That phrase is from the Latin, and it means, literally, "the vice-Christ" or "the substitute Christ." Now that is the Latin term. The Bible gives us a corresponding Greek term that means exactly the same thing. That term is *Antichrist*. The Bible uses this title for the one who opposes Jesus Christ, who sets himself up as the vice-Christ, the substitute Christ – or, as the Church of Rome puts it, "the one true representative of Christ on earth."

Second Thessalonians 2:4 tells us that Antichrist, the "man of sin", "opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself [setting himself forth, and declaring] that he is God." We find the term Antichrist, or vice-Christ, or substitute Christ, or supplanter of Christ, in three New Testament passages. I just want to draw your attention to one of them, First John chapter two, beginning at verse 18:

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they

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went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

John says that Antichrist *denies* that Jesus alone is the Christ. And the Greek word for "deny" means that Antichrist acts in a way that is totally unlike the One he claims to be and claims to represent. And thus it is with the Pope of Rome. Jesus Christ offers true salvation by grace alone, through faith alone. The Pope of Rome offers a false salvation based on a false grace that is no grace at all, dispensed at the whim of the church. And the false salvation offered by the Pope of Rome requires faith not in Christ, but in the false, man-made teachings of that false church. The Roman papacy is Antichrist.

Dear friend, the true representative of Christ on earth is not the Pope of Rome, but God the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 15:26, "But when the Comforter [the Holy Spirit] is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of Me" – that is, he shall tell the truth about Me. And in John 16:13, Jesus said, that "when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

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You don't need the Pope of Rome or the Roman Catholic Church to tell you what to think, or how to interpret the Bible. You don't need the false "Vicar of Christ." You need the true Representative of Christ, God the Holy Spirit, living within you, and illuminating His written Word for you.

No man is to be worshipped. No preacher. No public figure. No church leader. And certainly not the Pope of Rome. That is point number one.

2. Satan Is Not To Be Worshipped

Point number two: Satan is not to be worshipped. Satan wants to be worshipped, and there are growing numbers of Satan-worshippers today. I read an article recently where someone who is in a position to know, said that people would be surprised if they knew how many Satan-worshippers there are in Hollywood. And considering the trash and filth that come out of Hollywood, I don't think that's surprising.

And, of course, the Bible tells us that Satan tried to gain the worship of Jesus Himself while He was on earth. In Matthew chapter four, beginning at verse eight, we read this: "Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Just as man is not to be worshipped, Satan is not to be worshipped.

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3. Angels Are Not To Be Worshipped

Point number three: Angels are not to be worshipped. This was a problem in the Colossian church. People were being told that they needed to worship angels. We have a similar kind of false teaching in the New Age movement today – that people should worship angels and other spirit beings, that I believe are in fact the demons of Satan. But this was a problem way back in the Colossian church. And Paul said to them, in Colossians chapter two beginning at verse eighteen, “Let no one cheat you of your reward” – the reward that awaits you because of Christ – by “taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.”

And at the end of the book of Revelation, in chapter 19, the Apostle John was simply overwhelmed by the visions of the future that he had seen. And the angel who was showing him these things said, to him, in verse 9, “These are the true sayings of God.” And John says, “I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

So no man is to be worshipped, Satan is not to be worshipped, and no angel is to be worshipped.

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4. No False God Is To Be Worshipped

This brings us to point number four: No false god is to be worshipped. This was the great sin of Israel throughout the Old Testament – the sin of idolatry. Even from the time they were in Egypt, even while they were in the wilderness for forty years, and even after they entered the Promised Land, they never put away the false gods of the pagans. They were continually going off into the worship of false gods, and continually going off into the terrible worship practices of the pagans, including gross immorality, and the human sacrifice of their own children. It was for these sins that Israel and Judah went into captivity.

And then in the New Testament, we find the pagan Greeks mistaking Christ's apostles for their false gods, and trying to worship them. We read in Acts chapter fourteen, beginning at verse eight, that Paul performed the miracle of healing a man who had been born a cripple, healing him so that he could stand up straight on his feet. And we read, beginning in verse ten, that

the man leaped and walked. Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

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But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them [that is, Jesus Christ]."

The first of the Ten Commandments is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." And the second is, "Thou shalt not make any image and worship it." Don't worship a false god. Don't commit idolatry. Today, the Buddhists and Hindus and other religions all worship their idols. But in Western culture, people are idolaters as well. They worship a preacher. They make an idol of a church building. They make an idol of their denominational affiliation. Or they make an idol of a sports figure, or a politician, or someone in entertainment. Some people make idols of their children or grandchildren. No man is to be worshipped. Some people make an idol of a job, or an idol of education. Some people make an idol of money. Some people make an idol of a car, or a house, or a boat, or other material things. No man, and no thing, is to be set up as a false god.

5. Jesus Christ Is to Be Worshipped

This brings us to our final point: Jesus Christ is to be worshipped. Only God is to be worshipped, not any man, and Jesus said that He is to be worshipped, just as God the Father is to be worshipped.

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We have Jesus' own words in John 5:23 – "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." The Greek word for "honor" in this verse is a word for worship. It means, "to revere, and to venerate." That is why we sing the great hymn, "All glory, laud and honor, to Thee, Redeemer, King!" True Christians worship and honor the true Christ here on earth today.

And in the book of Revelation, we have the visions of the heavenly scenes, both present and future, where Jesus Christ is worshipped.

Revelation 4:9-11 – "Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.' "

And Revelation 5:8-14 – "Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and

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we shall reign on the earth.’ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!’ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’ Then the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever."

Are You Truly Worshipping the True Christ?

I hope this part of our study of the declarations in Colossians 1:15 has given you a deeper appreciation for the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope that this study has also helped to equip you to answer those who deny that Jesus Christ is God, and to answer those who would ask you, "How do you know that Jesus Christ is God?"

In light of the things we have covered in this part of our series, let me ask you some questions: Are you a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin and from condemnation to Hell? Are you trusting in Him alone, in what He has done, for your eternal salvation? If you are trusting in Him today, are you worshipping Him as He should be worshipped? Worship the one true living God alone, and be careful to guard yourself from slipping into the false worship of anything or anyone else.

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