

# Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture (Part 8)

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## Introduction

### The Text

They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32)

### Part 8

- A. This is now the last sermon in the mini-series we’ve been calling [Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture](#). I hope it’s been helpful and encouraging to you.
- B. In this series, we’ve been trying to imagine a bit what happened with these two disciples here on the road to Emmaus.
  - 1. While they were dejected and depressed, Jesus does some Bible study with them showing them where he is in “Moses” and “the Prophets” and “in all the Scriptures” (v. 27).
  - 2. And when they see that, as they’re reflecting on it after the fact they say here: “Did not our hearts burn within us . . . ?” Wasn’t that an astounding thing? Wasn’t that just what we needed? Fresh vision of Christ and the gospel as found in all of Scripture—not just the NT (it didn’t even exist at this point) but the OT in particular!”
    - a. It’s what they needed and it’s what we need and it’s what I’ve been trying to help us with in this sermons. I’ve just been showing you all the ways we can see Jesus in Scripture.
- C. We’ve made our way through that Hub Diagram now, with eleven spokes and this morning we come to the twelfth and final.
  - 1. Jesus is the point of everything!!! And by everything here I mean everything—so included in that, and especially pertinent for our purpose here, is that he’s the point of everything in Scripture. He’s the point of this book, from beginning to end.

### When Jesus Teaches Your Hermeneutics Class

- A. I mentioned something in the first sermon of this series that I’d like to circle back to for a moment here. If you go to Bible college or seminary, they’ll make you take a class or two on what is called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is really the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation especially of biblical texts.

1. In other words, then, you take hermeneutics to learn how to interpret the Bible rightly. Not easily done, right? There's confusing stuff in there. Have you ever tried to read it? We need help.
- B. But, interestingly enough, in this scene from [Luke 24](#), in [v. 27](#) just referenced, Luke uses a Greek word related to the one from which we derive our word "hermeneutics" [Gk. [diērmēneuō](#)] when he's talking about what Jesus is doing: "[\[H\]e interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.](#)"
1. And this is very telling. I think the idea is that Jesus is here almost teaching a hermeneutics class. He's literally taking these disciples to school.
    - a. And what is the main point of this lecture? Well, it's essentially this: the key to properly interpreting the Bible is to see Jesus as the center and goal of it all.
- C. If we do not see Christ as the center and goal of all the Scriptures, if we don't see him there as the alpha and the omega of all biblical revelation, then we won't understand any of it aright.
1. He doesn't just make a little cameo appearance there in the four gospels at the start of the NT and then step once again out of view. No!
  2. He's present, in one way or another, through the whole thing—he's under every rock and around every corner; he's discerned in every chapter and every verse; his ghost haunts every page and every line.
- D. He's the key in which the song of Scripture is played.
1. I play music you know. And if you're going to play with others, you have to play in the same key or it's going to be disastrous. If I'm playing guitar in the key of C and you're playing your violin in the key of G# it's going to sound like nails being run down a chalkboard. But if we get it together and start playing in the same key, we make music.
  2. And I think it's like that with the Bible. If we don't see Jesus and the gospel as the key in which the whole of Scripture's song is played, then it's going to just seem like noise to us—disjointed, unpleasant, confusing. But when once we do see it, when everything starts playing in the key of Christ, then it all makes sense, then Scripture starts to sing.
    - a. Then your heart catches fire.
- E. He's the point of everything.

## Blasting Off

- A. The previous eleven spokes we've covered to this point have really all been just building to this.
- B. We could understand them as something akin to the countdown before a rocket's blastoff. And now here at last this ship's about to blow. We're sending this thing to space. It's taking off for the heavens. This is really all that's left to say.

1. Jesus is . . . (1) the Realization of Every Promise; (2) the Fulfillment of Every Prophecy; (3) the Essence of Every Symbol; (4) the Substance of Every Shadow; (5) the Apex of Every Attribute; (6) the Epitome of Every Theme; (7) the Unveiling of Every Mystery; (8) the Climax of Every Story; (9) the Obedience of Every Command; (10) the Solution of Every Problem; (11) the Satisfaction of Every Longing . . .
  - a. . . . and he is, therefore, again, (12) the Point of Everything!!! So let's consider this last spoke now in a bit more detail . . .

## Spoke #12: Jesus Is the Point of Everything!!!

### Colossians 1:15-22

- A. All I want to do this morning is take us to a text that makes the case for Jesus' preeminence in this way more than any other text I know of: [Col. 1:15-22](#).
  1. What we find here answers the question, why should we expect that Jesus really is the point of everything? On what basis? In what way? Are we just overstating the case, exaggerating a bit? Where do we even get this idea?
- B. So let's read it. Speaking of Christ, Paul writes: "<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (Col. 1:15–22).
- C. So why should we expect that Jesus really is the point of everything? Well, for this I would like to divide these verses into two and show you that . . .
  1. First, it's because he's the firstborn of all creation ([vv. 15-17](#)).
  2. And, second, it's because he's the firstborn from the dead ([vv. 18-22](#)).
    - a. The first title really speaks to Jesus as the Lord of Creation.
    - b. The second speaks to him as the Lord of Redemption.
      - i. Taken together, both eloquently express why Jesus really is the point of everything.
- D. So let's take these one at a time . . .

## Title #1: Firstborn of All Creation (vv. 15-17)

### What Does It Mean?

- A. This title is given to Jesus there in [v. 15](#). But what exactly does it mean?
- B. Well, we should probably clear up first what it doesn't mean.
  - 1. It doesn't mean that Jesus is the first of all God's creation, meaning: he is not himself God but was rather created by God . . . albeit before anyone else.
    - a. This interpretation is just a shoutout to that old Arian heresy from days gone by that denied Jesus' divinity and reduced him to a mere created being.
- C. But we know this can't be the meaning here. All we have to do is look at the context and the flow of Paul's thought.
  - 1. Look at the connection between [vv. 15, 16](#): "<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth . . ."
  - a. Did you catch that? Right after calling Jesus the "[firstborn of all creation](#)," Paul goes on to ground that title in the very fact that Jesus is actually the agent of creation.
  - b. He was not merely created before all things. He is the one who created all things.
  - 2. And Paul goes even further to say at the end of [v. 16](#) there that "[all things were created through him and for him](#)." He is not only the agent of creation, he is the end goal of it. He's what it's all about.
- D. So, therefore, we understand this title "[firstborn of all creation](#)," not as referring to Jesus' place in a temporal sense (he was created first), but instead as referring to his place in terms of status. He is first not along some timeline but first in authority and stature, as the one above all creatures because they were created by him, through him, and for him.
  - 1. Firstborns in Jewish culture enjoyed preeminence among their siblings. It came with certain power and privilege.
    - a. And that is the idea Paul is leveraging here. So far as creation is concerned, Jesus stands sovereign over it all.

### The Image of God

- A. We could, perhaps, be equally confused by this idea that he is "[the image of the invisible God](#)" ([v. 15](#)).

1. I don't know about you, but when I read [Gen. 1](#), I thought that was something that was said of mere human beings. We were made in the image of God, were we not? Most certainly we were.
  2. But, again, you see we miss it. Paul is not saying that Jesus was made in the image of God in the way you and I have been. He is saying that Jesus is the image of God in the way you and I never could be.
    - a. We have been made in the image. Jesus is the image (cf. [2 Cor. 4:4](#)). Do you catch the difference?
- B. It's the difference between the painted portrait and the one being painted—the one posing in the studio for a little while, but then going on from there.
1. You see, we are the canvas with the image of God painted on us as it were. Jesus is the one the artist was looking at while he painted. We were made in the image. He is the image.

## Other Texts

- A. There are so many other texts that were brought to mind at this point. Let me just rifle off a few to see if we can add a little bit more color to what's being said here by Paul regarding Jesus as Lord of Creation in this sense . . .
- B. I thought immediately of the opening lines of Hebrews. The overlap in logic and theme is striking. The same ideas are woven together with Jesus as firstborn, creator of all, and image of God.
1. So he writes: “<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things [a firstborn's privilege], through whom also he created the world [the agent of creation].<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature [the image of God]. . .” ([Heb. 1:3](#)).
- C. Then there's [Prov. 8](#) and this compelling discussion there concerning the wisdom with which God created all things. And the interesting thing is that wisdom is personified, it stands forth in the text as if a person.
1. So wisdom, speaking in the first person there, says: “<sup>22</sup> The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.<sup>23</sup> Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.<sup>24</sup> When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.<sup>25</sup> Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth,<sup>26</sup> before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.<sup>27</sup> When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,<sup>28</sup> when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,<sup>29</sup> when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,<sup>30</sup> then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,<sup>31</sup> rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man” ([vv. 22–31](#)).

- a. Many have seen the connection here to Christ, not the least of which because Paul himself says in [Col. 2:3](#) that in Jesus “[are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.](#)” So Jesus is linked to wisdom and, in that, shown to be there with God as an agent of creation.
- D. And, of course, related to this is [John 1](#), where this person called Wisdom by which God created the world naturally connects to this person here called the Word: “<sup>1</sup>[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.](#) <sup>2</sup>[He was in the beginning with God.](#) <sup>3</sup>[All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. . . .](#)<sup>14</sup>[And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth](#)” (vv. 1–3, 14).
- 1. This person standing forth as Wisdom and Word is none other than the Son, Jesus himself.
- E. So why is Jesus the point of everything? Because everything was made by him and everything was made for him. He’s the “[firstborn of all creation.](#)”
- 1. But that is not all . . .

## Title #2: Firstborn from the Dead (vv. 18-22)

- A. This is where we start to shift there in [v. 18](#) and we discover that Jesus is not only the Lord of Creation, he’s also the Lord of Redemption. He’s not just created us. He’s also redeemed us.

### Transition: “In Him All things Hold Together”

- A. But now, before we really dive into this one, there is a little description of Christ given there at the end of [v. 17](#) that I think in many ways serves as a transition between the two ideas of Christ as Lord of Creation and Lord of Redemption.
- 1. We’re told there, quite wonderfully, that “[in him all things hold together.](#)”
    - a. If were to keep reading on in [Heb. 1](#) mentioned earlier we would see something similar at the end of [v. 3](#) where the author says there that Jesus “[upholds the universe by the word of his power.](#)” That is the idea.
      - i. He is the binding, he’s the glue . . . for everything.
- B. You might think of the solar system and the blazing sun at the center of it. It’s the sheer gravity of that fireball that keeps everything else in orbit, in line. And, if you remove that, it all just spirals out into the black.
- C. On a smaller scale, you might think of your own home and the way you’re constantly having to keep things up lest it just give way to chaos and mess (esp. if you have kids). Some of you have probably just given up.

1. Sometimes, the amount of stuff my kids create, the messes that they make, the toys, the papers, the crumbs, it feels like we're just going to get buried alive. Unless we keep it up. Unless we keep things in order. Organize, clean, etc.
  2. And even if you don't have kids, just keeping up with dust and dirt, and things that break, that's a full-time job it feels like.
- D. And Jesus is doing that not just for a little 4 bed 2 bath house. He's doing that for the universe.
1. From a creation standpoint, he's the one who brings out the sun in the morning and the stars at night. He's the one who fills our lakes and rivers and keeps the ocean's tide in its place. He superintends the seasons and gives time for planting and time for harvest.
    - a. The order in the universe that we perceive, it's not just automatic. Nothing in life is that way. You stop overseeing things in your home and it trends not towards greater order but chaos. It's the second law of thermodynamics, isn't it? It's entropy.
      - i. And the cosmos would go the same were it not for the oversight of Christ.
  2. From a redemption standpoint (and here you'll see why I say this idea of Christ holding all things together stands in the middle of our two main points), this world is not just threatening to give way to disorder in some physical sense, it's also threatening to break down in a moral sense as well. We have turned from God. Every one of us.
    - a. As John goes on to say: "<sup>9</sup>The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him" (John 1:9-10). And later: "the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19).
      - i. We were created by him, for him, but we didn't want him. So what does he do? Wash his hands of us? No. He comes after us, to redeem us.
        - (1) Jesus stands in the gap for a sinful world—he's holding the rope as it were, unwilling to let us spin out into darkness: "[I]n him all things hold together" (v. 17). Both creation and redemption.

## He Is the First to Beat Death

- A. So now we're ready to consider more fully what is meant by this idea that he's the "firstborn from the dead."
- B. The point here, I think, is that Jesus himself actually goes into that darkness, he hurls himself out into the chaos, he tumbles down into the grave . . . and then he comes up and out the other side, he beats it.

1. And, you know, he's the first to ever do it. That's what this is saying. He's the "firstborn from the dead."
- C. Sometimes we can get so familiar with Christianity that truths like this don't stagger us like they should. "Oh yeah, Jesus rose from the dead. I know that."
1. But this is Jesus taking on the greatest foe mankind has ever faced and overcoming it.
    - a. Every other religious leader, all the great men and women of history . . . they all just died. They may have had some nice things to say, some wisdom to share during their life, they may have done some good stuff, but at the end of the day they just hit the dirt like the rest of us. They're dead. Every last one of them.
    - b. But not Jesus. He's alive! Death had him in its jaws and he just rips open that foul mouth and walks right on out . . . the stronger for it.
      - i. So Paul writes in [1 Cor. 15](#): " <sup>54</sup> 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' <sup>55</sup> 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'" (vv. 54b–55). Christ stands over the fallen Goliath triumphant.

## His Victory Is Ours

- A. And here's what I love, it's not like he just does this for himself.
1. He's not just showing off here, flaunting his power for us to kind of gawk at or something.
  2. No, he does this for you and for me.
- B. That's an idea actually also implied in this idea of "firstborn" here. You see, if he's the "firstborn from the dead," it means, while he was the first to do it, he won't be the last. His victory spills over to his people, it's accomplished on behalf of his people. He did it before us, but he did it for us!
1. So Paul says in [Rom. 8:29](#) that Jesus was to be "the firstborn among many brothers."
  2. Or, similarly, in [1 Cor. 15](#), Paul talks about Jesus as the firstfruits of a greater resurrection harvest: " <sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (vv. 20–23).
  3. And if we return to those verses that come later in the chapter which I just referenced, look at the context, [v. 54](#): " <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' <sup>55</sup> 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vv. 54–57).



- a. You caught it didn't you? This victory isn't just his. God "gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." It's ours. It's not just he who puts on the imperishable and immortal glory of the resurrection. We do in him!
- C. I think we are actually getting a great visual of the type of thing I'm talking about here with the Olympics right now. Think about it.
  - 1. Yes, these Olympians, they are competing for themselves, they want the victory for themselves and things.
  - 2. But really, at the end of the day it's about more than that, it's for their country. That's why we're cheering like crazy when Nathan Chen crushes it on the ice or whatever. He represents us. His victory, in a sense, is ours.
    - a. And that's what Christ's victory is like. He is the firstborn from the dead, and because of that, those who put their trust in him shall also share in that triumph. It's amazing!

### He Reconciles Us to Himself

- A. This triumph of Christ as the firstborn from the dead for us is further elaborated on in [Col. 1:19-22](#) in particular.
- B. Look at [vv. 19-20](#) again: " <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."
  - 1. The operative word here is "reconcile"—it means to restore friendly relations between two parties, to reestablish unity, compatibility, to make peace.
    - a. If we were created by Jesus, for Jesus, then true life and joy and shalom will only be found if we can be brought back into relationship with Jesus.
      - i. And that's why he goes to the cross. That's what he accomplishes in his death and resurrection. It's not just about giving you life eternal. It's about giving you life with himself, life with God.
- C. As Paul goes on to say in [vv. 21-22](#): " <sup>21</sup>And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him."
  - 1. Your sins, of necessity, kept you at a distance from God, at odds with God, "alienated" from God.
  - 2. But Christ, taking your sins upon himself on that cross, shedding his own blood in payment for them, has washed you clean. You are counted "holy," "blameless," and "above reproach," not because you are in and of yourself, but because you are in him.
    - a. It's as Paul says just a few verses later in [Col. 2:14](#): "[God has cancelled] the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to

the cross.” Did you owe God for your sin? Immeasurably so. But God took that record of debt and nailed it to the cross. In other words, Christ paid it on your behalf.

- i. Now you can come into God’s presence and experience not his wrath but his love.
- D. So, again, why is Jesus the point of everything? Because everything was made by him and everything was made for him . . . and, even though we fell away from him, we can be redeemed in him and reconciled once more to him.
- 1. He is not just the “firstborn of all creation” . . . he is also the “firstborn from the dead.”

## Conclusion

### Do Not Shift!

- A. That’s why God puts him on every page of our Bibles. That’s why you can expect the song of Scripture to be played in the key of Christ and his cross.
- 1. That’s why Paul goes on from here in [Col. 1:23](#) and says: “Whatever you do, don’t “[shift] from the hope of the gospel that you heard . . . .”
    - a. As I’ve been saying through all of this: we need the gospel every day . . . and that’s why God puts it on every page!
- B. So I don’t know where exactly Jesus went in his Bible study with these two on the road to Emmaus.
- 1. Did he take them to [Gen. 3:15](#) and show himself to be the promised offspring of the woman?
  - 2. Did he take them to [Hos. 11:1](#) and show himself to be the fulfillment of the exodus from Egypt?
  - 3. Did he take them to the descriptions of the tabernacle and temple and show how it was all pointing to him?
    - a. I don’t know what he did. But here’s what I do know: he could’ve taken them anywhere, because he’s everywhere.
- C. Jesus really is . . . (1) the Realization of Every Promise; (2) the Fulfillment of Every Prophecy; (3) the Essence of Every Symbol; (4) the Substance of Every Shadow; (5) the Apex of Every Attribute; (6) the Epitome of Every Theme; (7) the Unveiling of Every Mystery; (8) the Climax of Every Story; (9) the Obedience of Every Command; (10) the Solution of Every Problem; (11) the Satisfaction of Every Longing; and (12) the Point of Everything!!!
- D. And it’s been my prayer, as we’ve been making our way through all of this, that we all have found ourselves saying with these disciples in [Luke 24:32](#): “Did not our hearts burn within us . . . while he opened to us the Scriptures?”