

Who is This? - Communion.

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[0 : 00] If you take a look in your bulletin there, you'll note the message this morning is, Who is this? And if you'll take a look inside the bulletin also, there is the responsive reading from Matthew 21, verses 1 through 11.

And I'd like you to join in on the more darkened printing, which is usually the paragraph after I have spoken.

When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethage at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent to his disciples.

Saying to him, Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there, and a colt with her.

Untie them, and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them, and immediately he will send them.

[1 : 25] This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet. Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, gentle and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them. Most of the crowd spread their coats in the room, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the room.

The crowds going ahead of him, and those who followed, were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. When he had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?

And the crowds were saying, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.

[2 : 54] And who is this indeed? A very legitimate question, and one that certainly deserves an answer. Everything, I mean absolutely everything, was riding upon the identity of this individual, this Galilean peasant, born in Bethlehem, reared in Nazareth, born down south, raised up north.

And he made frequent trips down south. Probably the first one that is recorded in his boyhood is when he was but 12 years of age, and he amazed the teachers in the temple by what he had to say, both the questions that he asked and the answers that were provided.

And it is imperative to understand that because the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Promised One, is the very heartbeat of Scripture, and it is tied to a promise that goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 3, where Eve is promised that there will be seed of her body that will one day come upon the scene, and that this seed will actually succeed in undoing the curse that human sin had brought upon humanity.

And at the outset of these few remarks, just let me insert this, if I may. This is the only place that I know of, if there are others they are unaware, I am unaware of, this is the only place on the entire planet where you will find an explanation as to why the world is the way it is now.

How did we get this way? It all began in Genesis chapter 3. This is the only reasonable explanation you will find.

[5 : 18] You take into consideration the evolutionary hypothesis and all that it portends, as well as the secularist viewpoint, usually also tied with evolution, which suggests that there is no God, and that creation, what we call creation, is something that just came about spontaneously, without an uncaused first cause.

Nonsense like that. I mean, even Julie Andrews knew that nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could. And that's made quite clear in the sound of music, but it's also good theology.

So, they have no explanation. There is nothing there but a question mark. The Bible provides the only explanation for why the world is the way it is, where it has come from, and ultimately where it is going.

You will not find this explanation anywhere else. And the remarkable and comforting thing about the explanation the Bible gives, when you connect it to and compare it with the real world we live in today, it fits.

It fits. The explanation is very viable, very reasonable, and very logical. So, everything has to do with the identity of this one who was promised.

[6 : 44] The world waited, the Hebrew world in particular, waited for 4,000 years for this to come to pass. Every generation thought that theirs might be the one that would produce the coveted seed of the woman, because that seed, offspring of the woman, would be the Messiah Redeemer, God's Superman, God's fix-it, God's man who would succeed in reversing the penalty of the curse and all that accompanied it.

And because this promise was given to Abraham, given originally to Eve, and then continued through Abraham, Abraham was one of the direct descendants of Shem, one of the three sons of Noah, and Abraham's son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons comprised the progenitors of the 12 tribes of Israel.

And God raised up an entire nation, albeit a minor nation, numerically among the nations of the world, but a very, very significant nation.

He raised up this nation of people called Hebrews, called Jews, through whom he would ultimately bring that Messiah.

So, centuries passed and centuries passed, and no Messiah. Yet the promise was there. Was God going to make good on his promise?

[8 : 21] After all, if he's waited 4,000 years to make good on it, maybe he's forgotten. Maybe it's no longer applicable. Maybe God changed his mind. And then one day, in an obscure village, called Nazareth, right next door to a Gentile community up north, an angel appeared to a teenage Jewish maiden named Mary, and told her, as much as the time has come, God is going to make good on his promise.

That which he swore to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is going to come to pass. And you, Mary, you, are going to be the mother of that long-awaited Messiah.

poor Mary was shocked, right down to her toes. And her first question was, how can this be?

I know what makes babies. And I've never known a man. How can this be? And the angel said, the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

For of God, all things are possible. And here was this virgin girl going to bear the long-awaited Messiah. So, all Israel anticipated, longed for, looked for, this Messiah to come.

[10 : 13] Generations came and went, still no Messiah. But now, the reality is there. And now, this Messiah, this Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Messiah, is born.

And it caused quite a stir. Men came from afar, we are told, they are called Magi. And the reason they came, was because they had seen this mysterious star.

Now, these fellows were not astrologers. They were astronomers. Astrology is an illegitimate thing.

Astronomy is very legitimate. Astronomy is a legitimate science. And these men were not only astronomers, but I am convinced personally, they were Jews.

They were Jews that were coming from the east. They saw his star and they were in the west and they were coming to the east and they saw his star and they were following the star.

[11 : 21] And they said, we have come to worship him. Where is he that is born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and we have come to worship him.

Why would they even care about this Jewish king that was born? And why, pray tell me, would they want to worship him?

You don't worship even kings or royalty. You worship deity. Deity is the only one worthy of worship.

And they knew, oh yes, they knew, these were leftovers from the Babylonian captivity who had lived there in exile and didn't return to Jerusalem but stayed in Babylon.

Many generations came and went and they were born and reared in Babylon, started businesses, put down roots, manifested everything including their Judaism.

[12 : 25] And they maintained that. And now, what they are saying, these wise men coming from the east, what they are saying is this, we know who this is. This is the Messiah.

This is the long awaited one. And they knew that when the Messiah came, it would be because God sent him. He would be from God. And that's why they came.

So, as the years rolled on, in relative obscurity, we knew nothing about Jesus and his childhood except one curious incident that took place when he was 12 years of age and that's the only thing we know.

But when he turned 30, when he turned 30, that was the age at which one who was to be a priest was inducted into the Jewish priesthood.

And Jesus reached his 30th birthday and was arriving on the scene where his cousin, John the baptizer, had been baptized as a priest just six months earlier because John was six months older than Jesus.

[13 : 41] Jesus. And John looks up and sees Jesus coming down the road and he says, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And John baptized him even though he was reluctant to do so.

And we read that Jesus, being 30 years of age, was inducted into the priesthood, but it was not the same priesthood that John belonged to because John was a Levite and Jesus was not a Levite.

Jesus was born a descendant of the tribe of Judah. That's the royal line. So, in order for his priesthood to have legitimacy, he became a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

And there were only two priests in the whole order. One is Melchizedek and the other is Jesus. This goes back to Genesis 14 and it's a marvelous passage. Mysterious guy, this Melchizedek, king of Salem, king of righteousness, prefigures our Lord Jesus.

So, now Jesus is baptized as a priest in the order of Melchizedek and he is introduced by John in the first couple of chapters of John's gospel.

[14 : 58] John says, I came baptizing that I might make him known to Israel. And he officially introduced Jesus as the Messiah.

Behold, the Lamb of God. Now, here became the burning issue. Was he? Or wasn't he? Because people are going to have their doubts.

You know, even the very one who identified him and called him the Messiah later had his doubts.

his own cousin. Because Jesus came preaching the same thing that John the baptizer preached and that was repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And that's what Jesus preached as well.

But if the problem, if the kingdom was at hand, where is it? What's happened to it? why doesn't Jesus get it going?

[16 : 05] Because this kingdom is to fix the whole world, the whole rotten, corrupt world. The Messiah is going to bring his kingdom in and change everything.

And righteousness will prevail and death will be done away with. and the knowledge of the Lord is going to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

So, where is this kingdom? And this is what John the Baptist was preaching and the next thing John knew, he's in jail.

He's in Herod's prison. And he doesn't have any idea when he's going to be released. And then we have this incredible story of Herodias and Salome and her dance and her requesting the head of John the Baptist on a charger.

And Herod didn't want to put John to death, but he didn't want to lose face either. And he told this sweet young thing who was gyrating her body around that you had pleased me so much you asked anything you want, honey, you can have.

[17 : 15] You just name it. And I'll probably have smashed on top of it. And she said, all right, bring me the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

Swallows hard. Well, I mean, I when I said you could have anything you wanted, I didn't mean I and everybody's looking at him, you know.

Well, what about it, your majesty? You made the offer. Are you going to make good on it or not? Or are you going to go back on your word? Bring it in!

And the executioner is called and they go to John's cell. John's and John is already having real serious thoughts.

And he had earlier called his disciples to him. And John said to them, hey, fellas, I don't understand what's happening. Jesus, Jesus is the Messiah and I've introduced him as the Messiah and I believe he was the Messiah and so do a lot of other people.

[18 : 44] And I don't understand why I'm here in jail. I'm on his side. Why isn't he exercising the powers of this kingdom and making things right? And he could start right here. Listen, listen, I want you to go and find Jesus and ask him for me.

Are you the one that should come? Who has come? Or is this all a mistake and we ought to be looking for somebody else? So they find Jesus and they ask him that question.

And he says, you go back and you tell John that the eyes of the blind are open and the deaf are hearing and the lame are walking and the dead are raised.

Tell John that. And they did. And we don't know to what degree it sufficed for him. But we do know that John lost his head.

You realize the miracles that Jesus performed were all designed to authenticate his claim of being the Messiah, being the long-awaited one.

[19 : 57] Jesus said, if I cast out demons and perform miracles by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come among you.

And the kingdom was there in the person of Christ. And he took with him everywhere he went manifestations of that kingdom.

Because in the kingdom things are going to be fixed. There won't be any blind people in the kingdom. And that's why Jesus gave sight to the blind.

There won't be any people with withered limbs. There won't be any people who are deaf. And that's why Jesus performed the miracles that he did, was to authenticate his claim to be the Messiah.

And you would have thought that people would have just lined up in droves, and really they did, but still they constituted a minority because the majority still did not believe.

[21 : 05] And you know, God has always had to work with a minority. From Genesis through Revelation, God will always be working with the minority. The majority will never be on his side.

And it was so then. So the question became, and the only question that had any significance was the identity of this one.

The consequences of that decision were just absolutely enormous, staggering, because it boiled down to an either-or situation. If Jesus is the Messiah, then you get on your face before him.

You acknowledge his lordship, you are ready and available to do his beck and call, whatever it may be. He is absolute lord.

On the other hand, if he is not the Messiah, then he's a phony. If he is not who he claimed to be, he has no integrity, and there is certainly nothing in him that would require you or anyone else to worship him or obey him.

[22 : 22] You see, this is a simple, simple rule of logic and reasoning. Philosophers call this the law of non-contradiction, where you have a and the opposite of a.

a. If a is right, then the opposite of a, non-a, cannot also be right. This is a very simple law of logic and we apply it to everything.

We couldn't live without it. This is a. The opposite of a, which is non-a, cannot also be right if a is right. The opposite of a has to be wrong, incorrect.

If you don't think that way, you can't exist, you can't survive, you can't function in the world. And then there is the law of excluded middle.

And that is, if Jesus is the Messiah, the one sent from God, then he can not be not the Messiah, the one sent from God.

[23 : 32] Now this is not what they call rocket science. This is pretty simple stuff. It is so simple that any normal thinking person can get their brain around it.

And the law of the excluded middle says there is no middle. Either he is or he is not. There is no he is kind of.

That won't fly. Not in logic or reason or anything else. He either is or he isn't. You have got to come down on one side or the other. And for those who say, well, I can't make up my mind.

I am not on this side or on that side. I am somewhere in the middle. Wait a minute. There is no middle. The middle is excluded. That is why it is called the law of the excluded middle.

Well, don't get me wrong. I don't reject Jesus as my Savior. Savior. I don't accept him either. I guess I'm kind of a skeptic.

[24 : 42] I'm kind of an agnostic. I don't know. I don't know. Okay? Where are you? Well, you're not in the middle because there is no middle.

You're in the mode of rejection. Because in not accepting Christ, you are already in a mode of rejection. That's where you are.

You may not know it. You may say, I can't make up my mind or I haven't decided. Yes, you have. Yes, you have. Because the middle is excluded.

If you have not accepted, you are in a mode of rejection. Whether you realize it or not, you are. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, he that is not with me is against me.

And I've talked to some people about that. They say, no, wait a minute. Don't get me wrong. I'm not against Jesus. I just don't know that he's the real deal. But I'm not against him. I'm kind of neutral.

[25 : 41] No, you're not. There is no neutral. The middle is excluded. You are already in a mode of rejection if you have not embraced and accepted.

It is important to understand that. So this became the burning issue. Who is he? this was the only thing that anybody cared about when Jesus was here on the earth.

Who do men say that I the son of man am? And Peter came back with you are the Christ. You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.

And do you know that was all that was required to be believed at the time? because essentially that's all the information that was available.

As you read the Gospels, and this is very, very important, very important. Please hear me now. As you read the Gospels, even though Jesus predicted in plain language his upcoming death, burial, and resurrection after he got to Jerusalem, him, nobody believed that.

[26 : 58] His own apostles didn't believe it. And Peter rebuked him for saying it. So, when the Gospel was preached, as Jesus preached it, and as John the Baptist preached it, even though John said, behold the Lamb of God, and Jesus was that sacrificial Lamb, that is never explained and is never spelled out.

And we find such things as this, rich young ruler, in Matthew 19, when he came to Jesus and said, good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

I can promise you Jesus did not say, well, you have to believe in my death, burial, and resurrection for your sin in order to have eternal life.

He never said that. that might strike you as rather obvious, but you would be surprised how many people believe this was the gospel that was preached in the gospels.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. No, it wasn't. No, it wasn't. Never was. The gospel that was preached in the gospels was the gospel of the kingdom.

[28 : 14] It was repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That's an entirely different thing. And Jesus said to this young man, well, there's this issue of the commandments, you know, honor your father and your mother.

And this young man said, well, I've done all that stuff. I've done that from my youth up. And then Jesus said, well, in that case, then you take and sell everything you have and give it to the poor and come and follow me.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. What do you do with that? Do you think Jesus was putting him on?

Do you think he was somehow setting him up for something? Of course not. What Jesus told that young man was in keeping with what was going on in Judaism and in the world at that time.

And it was a very, very different gospel. It had very legal ramifications. It was it was the Sermon on the Mount, which I think is really the constitution of the kingdom.

[29 : 23] And it is an expression of the law of Moses as it was meant to be kept in its spirit and not just in its letter. All of these things are involved. But when Jesus is crucified and buried and raised again, that provided an entirely different dimension to his identity because Jesus' identity changed.

His resume had increased considerably. And he wasn't merely the one who was sent from God as the Messiah.

Now he is a crucified, buried, raised, glorified, exalted Lord. That's the one we proclaim today.

But Jesus as he was before the cross didn't save anyone. Didn't provide eternal life for anyone. This is why Paul said, I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

The message changed. The message had a new dimension. The message provided the basis for the gospel of the grace of God. It is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

[31 : 02] But why should you do that? Why would you do that? Just one reason. It's because of your sin. What are you going to do with that?

What are you going to do with your sin? Oh, I don't have any of those. Well, you are self-deceived on top of it. Your plight is really, really bad.

We're all sinners. Every one of us. We're all self-willed, self-seeking, self-serving. It's part of our DNA. It's what we are. Number one, first and foremost, I'm going to get mine however I can.

I don't know how about you're going to get yours. That's the mentality that exists. That's our fallenness. That's what Jesus died for. So, when he became our substitute on that cross, what he did because of who he was, he balanced the scales of divine justice.

Incredible. This is why he's called Savior. And this is why no one else can wear that title.

[32 : 24] Savior. The Savior saves. Has he saved you? If he has saved you, he has saved you from only one thing, and that is your sin.

And when you acknowledge your sin, and admit your sin, and own up to your sin, and you see what your sin was responsible for requiring in the person of Christ, sin, that's called repentance.

When you repent of your sin, you own it. You take responsibility for it. You say, you know what, I'm just like everybody else.

Better than some, worse than some. I'm just another human being with a sin problem, and I can't handle it.

And that's why Jesus died to take my sin upon himself. Has he taken your sin? The way you transfer your sin to the person of Christ is called faith.

[33 : 42] It's called believing. The way Christ transfers his righteousness to you is by faith.

How do you know you have that? Only because God says you do. Don't believe you have it because you feel it, because tomorrow you may feel lousy.

So, feelings has nothing to do with it. It's called justification by faith. You look at the predicament.

You see Jesus Christ dying on that cross for your sin. You receive that as information. This is what preaching the gospel is.

That's all it is, is just giving people information, bringing them up to date, letting them know what God did in Christ. He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

[34 : 52] And when you understand that, that is called appropriating or understanding the gospel. That's why it's called good news.

This is the only good news that really matters. And it is the world's best good news ever proclaimed. And when you process that information and you see and understand who Jesus Christ is and what he did, your response to that is going to be one of a few different kinds.

You're going to say, well, too bad he died on the cross. He didn't die for my sin. In the first place, I'm not sure I have any. And in the second place, even if I have any, I didn't ask him to do that for me.

That's the response of some people. That's the response of some people. or your response might be, he did that for me.

God so loved me in that way that he gave up his only son to balance those scales of justice for me because he loved me.

[36 : 07] Yes. What's your response to that? What do you think about that? If your response is, I cannot resist that kind of love.

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, that Jesus Christ laid down his life for his enemies. faith. I want to put my faith and my trust and my confidence and my reliance in him.

That's the response of my heart. The Bible calls that exercising your faith. That is your belief. We are not saved by faith in faith.

We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and in Christ alone. And if you have made that decision, you are a child of God, not because you feel like it and certainly not because you deserve to be, but because God's grace has visited you and you have trusted Jesus as your substitute.

In acknowledging your sin, you repent of your sin and you embrace the finished work of Christ. that is your assurance of heaven. That is what places you in good standing before God.

[37 : 36] Nothing else can. Nothing. There is but one Savior. Multitudes of sinners but one Savior.

Jesus was able to do what he did because he was who he was. He was the infinite God, creator, son of God. His worth was of infinite value.

That is why this one solitary individual was able to make payment for the sins of billions because of who he was.

Who is this? He is the Lord of glory. He is the great I am. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

His name is wonderful. Mighty God, Prince of Peace. He is all of these things that the songwriters have created and sung about him. We can't say enough about him.

[38 : 40] We cannot justify him with our words or our wishes. He is the altogether lovely one. I trust that he is your Savior today. Would you pray with me please?

Loving Father, if there is one here who has been writing that imaginary fence of neutrality, we pray in the tenderness and sweetness of the Spirit of God, you will show them that no decision is a decision.

It's a decision of rejection. A decision of waiting is a decision of rejection. we have to be for you or against you.

The middle is excluded. Only you can reveal this sufficiently to anyone who may be harboring these thoughts, and we pray that if it has been your good pleasure to do so, that this dear person would be willing to say right now, in the privacy of their own heart, Lord Jesus, I no longer want to be undecided.

I believe you are who you said you are, and I want to put my lot, my case, my life, my future, into your hands.

[40 : 06] I want to trust you as being my substitute and balancing my scale before a holy God. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for doing for me what I could never do, redeeming me, and bringing me to yourself.

Here I am. Thank you for the promise that you will not reject anyone who comes to you. Dear friend, if you've made that your prayer this morning, please let someone know before you leave here so that they can be of encouragement to you.

Father, we are so grateful for the truths that you've been pleased to reveal because we wouldn't have any good news apart from it. Now that we've got it, we want to spread it and share it, and we want to celebrate it, and we do so this morning by coming to the table that you have provided for this very purpose.

We bless you and thank you for it in Christ's name. Amen. Would you open your hymnal, please? Number 413.

Number 413. Would you stand with me, please? Great Thou the bread of life, dear Lord to me, as thou didst great the heavens beside the sea, beyond the sacred page.

[42 : 07] I said thee, Lord, my spirit and for thee, who live in the world.

On the third. Open thy word of truth, that I may see. Thy message is unbear, great for me.

With his strength of you, thou came with me. Thy name is my life, who may help me.

And on the last. Oh, send thy spirit forth, thou come to me.

When he may touch my eyes, make me see, show me the truth I'm sealed within the world, and in the good way I see, the Lord.

[43 : 33] Thank you. You can see it please. And we emphasize again that if you are a believer, if you are privileged, you are entitled to partake of the elements, and it is not necessary that you be a member of Grace Bible Church, but it is necessary that you be a member of the body of Christ.

And if you are not, partaking of these elements will have no real meaning or value to you anyway. The night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, it was no doubt a single kind of like a large pancake, and tore from it a piece of bread, and said, take, eat, this is my body, and he distributed it to them, and each one took a piece from it.

Well, we don't have a common piece like that to pass around today, and that's not the important thing. The important thing is what the symbol actually means, what it stands for in the bread, and in the cup, and we have these symbols here that are provided as a remembrance, and you are cordially invited to join us if you are a member of the body of Christ.

Thank you. Thank you. hello to this speaking, thank you.

worth for being g Thank you.

[46 : 25] Thank you.

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