God With Us **– wk 1: The Great Mystery**

**Have you ever struggled with - knowing about God, hearing about God, trying to obey God- but feeling like He’s far away? We’ve all been there.**

**Especially at Christmas… busy, $ worries, family, parties… God, where are you? God are you really there - are you really with us - are you really with me?**

**New series leading us to Christmas Eve that deals with this very thing.**

[**Matthew 1:** **20 But while he thought about these things, (contemplating leaving Mary – she’s pregnant) behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=50&search=Matthew+1%3A21) **And she (Mary) will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, (Savior / healer) for He will save His people from their sins.”22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” (the angel is quoting Isaiah 7:14)**

**Christmas is about the very present and presence of God with us – interacting with us. Christmas is – God with us!**

**To truly understand this, you must understand who Jesus is!**

**First - What’s your favorite Christmas song? Play a few…**

**Let’s look one the oldest Christmas songs ever – Coloss. 1:15-20 Depending on translation laid out as a poem or song.**

**Many scholars believe Paul is quoting a common hymn sung in the early church. A song about Jesus - who he is, and how he came here for you.**

**An ancient Christmas song… God with us!**

**Colossians 1:15 He is (Jesus) the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.**

1. **Jesus is the image of the invisible God!**

**(John 8:58, Rev 22:13, Phil 2:6-11, John 14:6, John 1:1-18)**

**v1 - Christ is the image (gk. eikon = icon) of the invisible God**

**Right at top, Paul gives one of the clearest descriptions of who Jesus is in all of the Bible - JESUS IS GOD clothed in skin. Says it 7 diff. ways**

**Good doctrine develops a dynamic relationship w/God - verses of scripture become His voice- a way His presence is felt and sensed.**

**God is invisible. (Ex 33:20, John 1:18, 1 Tim 1:17, 6:15-16)**

**He is spirit - no eye can see or will ever see him…**

**God is unapproachable. (1 Tim 6:15-16, Hebrews 12:29)**

**Holy and radiant light - consuming fire. No man can see & live!**

**We can never get to God - ever! How then can we ever know him? Jesus the “image” (gk. eikon = icon) stamp of God. God came to us**

**\* But, are we not made in the image of God? (Gen.2) We are created to reflect and resemble God - relational, love, emotions – like God.**

**But Jesus is the very – exact image - representation of God**

**We are made in the image of God, Jesus is the very image.**

**Hebrews 1:3a The Son (Jesus) is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, (exact imprint of his nature) sustaining all things by his powerful word. (Jesus is the invisible God – in the flesh)**

**Colossians 2:9 For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**

**(Jesus is all God – the exact image)**

**ONE God - Mystery of the trinity. Not 3 gods (polytheism); He is not one God who wears diff hats (modalism); He is not God subdivided into part (partialism). One yet diff - a great mystery. Our finite, 3-dimensional minds cannot comprehend – He’s Multidimensional.**

**The father is the mind of God – (Jesus) the Word is the expression of that thought – the Spirit is the power that carries the thought. (John 1)**

**The father is omnipresent – the son is God present with us – the Spirit is God present in us.**

**John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. (Jesus is the very spark that made us conscience beings) 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. / 14 The Word (GOD) became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**That amazing mystery of that moment! When almighty God became a baby! Only one, never has been, never will be another!**

1. **Jesus is supreme over all things!**

**Colossians 1:15b …the firstborn over all creation. (NLT - He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation)**

**Some think it means Jesus was the first thing God created.**

**It does not mean that. It lit. means – first position of.**

**It refers to Jesus supreme position over all creation.**

**Notice how it continues - 16 for through him (Jesus) God (the invisible Father) created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He (Jesus) made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. (if Jesus was created and he created all things - then he created himself – that would be silly – Jesus is not a creation)**

1. **Jesus is creator of all things! (v16 for through him God created…)**

**All things visible (universe) & invisible (spirit realm) - by Him & for Him.**

**The amazing wonder of creation!**

**A comet vapor trails are up to 10,000 miles long. If you could take that vapor, and put it in a bottle, it would take up less than 1 cubic inch of space.**

**Saturn’s rings are 500,000 miles in circumference, but only about a foot thick.**

**If the sun were the size of a beachball and put on top the Empire State Building, the nearest stars would be as far away as Australia.**

**Earth travels around the sun at about 8X the speed of a bullet fired from a gun.**

**There are more insects in 1sq mile of rural land than all humans on earth.**

**A single human chromosome contains 20 billion bits of information. How much information is that? If written out in book form - it would take 4000 volumes.**

**It’s been said - every great work of art has a piece of the soul of the artist. You can know the artist thru their art. That’s how creation is. The heavens declare the glory of God. They point to the artist!**

**But like a beautiful wedding ring – the ring is not enough. The ring only points to the man behind the ring.**

1. **Jesus is forever eternally before all things!**

**17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

**Jesus did not just show up – 2017 years ago. He has eternally been present before all creation and will be long after.**

**Jesus is not God Jr. The Father’s Bubba. God in training -**

**Jesus the God of eternity – always existed! Before all!**

**Jesus in Rev refers to himself as Alpha and Omega - 6X**

**(Revelation 1:8, 17, 2:8, 3:14, 21:6, 22:13)**

1. **Jesus holds and sustains all things!**

**17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

**Scientists struggle to figure out how an atom can hold itself together. The nucleus of common oxygen atom - 8 protons (+ charge) and 8 neutrons (no charge) and 8 electrons (- charge) flying around it. Like charges repel and opposites attract. Yet here are 8 +charge protons – just hanging out together.**

**They should fly apart. They should have never existed… yet here they are.**

**The 20’s/30’s was discovered there is a powerful nuclear force holding atoms together. Not sure why it fully works– like gravity – they know the how, but not the why. They did find, firing protons into the nucleus – creates nuclear power and explosions.**

**Point is this - there is a mysterious power that holds not only atoms together – but also the entire universe. JESUS!!**

**God did not create us and check out. Jesus created all things – and actively holds all things together – for his pleasure.**

**By Him - thru Him - for Him. The beginning – middle - and end.**

**18 And He is the head of the body, the church, (Jesus is head of not just creation – but active with His people) who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.**

1. **Jesus is the head over all things – including the dead!**

**“firstborn from the dead” - \* Jesus the first to be resurrected and gloried!**

**In Jesus we get a glimpse of what His church will be like in the future.**

**Jesus was physically dead – physically buried – physically resurrected. Then walked, talked, ate, fixed a meal, walk thru walls, flew… He is the first glorified body – we see our future!**

**19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,**

**(fullness = pleroma. Lit. totality of the divine – not a piece or part)**

**God the Trinity is not a pie – with three equal parts. They are each fully God – 1 God – 3 persons… the mystery!**

**He is ruler of the all (preeminent) – even the dead and afterlife!**

**20 and by Him to reconciles all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.**

1. **Jesus alone has the power to heal His creation**

**God alone could bear our weight. No king, no govt., politician, ruler, or person can ever do that! Only His Blood!**

**Jesus “made peace through the blood of His cross.” – That baby was born to die a horrible death by torture. Jesus paid my sin - not my actions or my efforts - He alone has done it and he alone gets the glory!**

**This ancient Christmas song declares – Jesus is God!!!**

**Then Paul makes it personal - Colossians 1:21 And you, (you) who once were alienated (far from God) and enemies in your mind by wicked works, (our lives were opposite of God – That was me!) yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, (set apart) and blameless, (forgiven and new) and above reproach in His sight. (to be different)**

**The invisible God – became visible for us – for you!**

**We were the enemies – we were the criminals – yet He paid our ransom and served out our time on the cross.**

**He left the throne of heaven– to walk with us! To die for us!**

**To reconcile us! That means – bring us home!!!!!**

**The joy of Christmas – is found here. God came to us! Life – meaning – purpose – has come! Is here! The mystery of God – in the flesh!**

**The heavenly host of angels shouted and declared it!!! - Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (the promised one – you have been praying and waiting for!) 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (in a food box - humble arrival)**

**13 Suddenly a great company (plethos – a many multitude) of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”**

**Round 1 - As a humble servant. A baby in a food box. To grow and bear my judgement – my sin – my shame.**

**Round 2 - He’s coming riding a white horse in full glory as the King of kings! And - we will see him as he truly is!**

**This is when the final part of this verse happens - Colossians 1:22b …to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.**

**Why would Jesus do this? Why would Jesus come here? An even bigger mystery than the trinity – the mystery of God’s great love for us!**

**God loves you – God is for you – God thru Christ – is with you!**

**Are you stunned? Are you in awe?**

**So, when you see that manger (pic) – a picture of a baby – he is not just a messenger – a piece – a part – or a sample – of the divine. That is GOD! In totality. In the flesh.**

**The greatest present of all – the Fathers gives us his presence!**

**The invisible Father – in the flesh – God with us!**

**God with us in our pain – sorrows – suffering – trials – tears!**

**God with us in our joys – laughter – peace – and blessings!**