

AG WEEK OF PRAYER 2022

AWESOME!

EXPLORING THE NATURE
AND NAMES OF JESUS

SPECIAL 7-DAY EXCERPT

DICK EASTMAN



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A CALL TO THE HEIGHTS.....	4
A MONTH IN THE SON.....	8
THE SUPREME JESUS.....	12
THE AWESOME JESUS	17
THE BEAUTIFUL JESUS	22
THE HUMAN JESUS.....	27
THE DIVINE JESUS	32
THE PREEMINENT JESUS.....	37
THE INCOMPARABLE JESUS	42

CONTENTS

A CALL TO THE HEIGHTS

So, my dear Christian friends, companions in following this call to the heights, take a good hard look at Jesus. He's the centerpiece of everything we believe.

HEBREWS 3:1 MSG

Someone has said, "If you want to get in good with God, brag on His Son!" Here goes!

It all began with a question from a friend—this personal quest to explore the wonders of the nature and names of Christ.

David Bryant, author of the classic volume *Christ Is Now*, all 608 pages exalting the Person of Jesus Christ, was speaking to the staff of Every Home for Christ, the ministry I lead. I had invited David to our ministry headquarters, The Jericho Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to spend a day in prayer with me. Because our staff begins each day with a time of corporate prayer and worship, I asked David if he would share something from his heart that morning concerning his life's calling. Then, as a staff, we would gather around him to pray for God's blessing on his calling. Of course, I was certain everything we would hear in those moments from David would be about Jesus!

Our Core Identity

David didn't disappoint. He began by quoting Swiss professor Karl Barth, one of the most influential theologians of the last century. Barth would often challenge his students: "Show me your Christology and I'll tell you who you are!"¹ Christology, of course, is the study of the life of Christ, or the theology of the Person of Jesus Christ. Bryant paraphrased Barth's words suggesting, "What you think about God's Son is the single most important thing anyone can know about you." Bryant further explained, "In a profound sense, the core identity of any Christian must never be separated from his or her vision of Jesus Christ. That's because Christ is the core identity of Christianity itself!"

A Call to the Heights

¹Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. 4, Part 2: *The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 78.

Bryant then asked our staff: “What do *you* think about God’s Son?” I could almost hear the corporate minds of our staff, the majority of whom are under the age of 35, silently responding: “He’s really cool,” or even, “He’s awesome!” Everyone in the room, of course, knew that Jesus was the reason for our ministry’s existence. For one thing, it’s in the very name of the ministry—Every Home for Christ. We often say our name is our mission. Everything we do is about Jesus. Our goal is to take the good news of Christ’s love to every home on earth.

But what David proposed next in his brief message that morning brought pause to most if not all in the room. It was a challenge for each to engage in an imaginary exercise. It was meant to help everyone stop and think about how well we actually knew who Jesus is—right now. That simple exercise profoundly affected me. For days afterward it was on my mind almost constantly. I had been in the crosshairs of David’s challenge. In fact, it has led to the writing of this book. Here’s how it unfolded. . . .

Captivated by a Challenge

Bryant shared:

Imagine you have just been invited by the most popular radio talk show, a world-wide talk show, to answer a single question. Your response would go global. Billions will hear. You will have three minutes to speak to the entire world about Jesus. The talk show host then gives you the question and hands you the microphone. The question: “Who is Jesus Christ right now?” Your head spins for a moment. You do recall how Jesus asked a similar question of His disciples centuries ago. It’s recorded in Matthew 16:13: “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (NKJV). Now it’s your turn to tell the whole world.

David amplified the question by suggesting the radio talk show host asks you: “How would you describe God’s Son in terms of all that He is at this present moment?” He then adds a bit of clarification to the experiment: “Keep in mind, your goal is not to tell the listeners about who Jesus was in the past during His earthly ministry; nor is it to tell about who He will be someday when He returns in His glory, but who He is right now. Further, you’re not being asked to explain what Jesus has done for you personally, as wonderful as that has been.” David further explains: “You see, this isn’t about you. Whether you or I exist is irrelevant. You’re to describe simply who Christ is as the Person of God’s only

Son, exalted at this very instant as Sovereign Lord over heaven and earth!” I knew our staff had been captivated by the challenge, as was I.

Later, after spending a better part of the day with David praying in one of the numerous prayer grottos at our ministry headquarters, The Jericho Center, I mentally went through that simple exercise. Here I was, leading a ministry sharing the Good News of Jesus with as many as 350,000 families every day, at their doorsteps, in 150 nations, and I saw myself stammering and stuttering at an imaginary microphone trying to describe who Jesus is to me, right now, for just three coherent minutes on a worldwide radio broadcast. What followed over many months was a desire to get to know the Jesus who changed my life six decades ago in a much fuller and richer way—now!

Becoming a Christ Explorer

David Bryant’s challenge soon led me into a yearlong pursuit of exploring the wonders of the nature of Christ. With scraps of folded paper in my pocket at all times throughout each day, whenever I thought of a new descriptive adjective picturing the nature or character of Christ, out came those scraps. Soon I was adding passages of Scripture that highlighted these qualities to my growing list. The scraps grew and multiplied! Jesus was taking center stage in my life. Or was it that I was moving step by step toward joining Him at center stage of His life? I’m sure it’s the latter.

I realized I couldn’t put everything I scribbled down to later expand and compile into a practical devotional book unless it approached the size of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (all 1,225 pages). So what follows is a bit of a primer. A definition of primer reads, “A textbook giving the first principles of any subject” (*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*). This book is barely a beginning—which brings to mind the apostle John’s concluding words to his gospel: “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen” (John 21:25 NKJV). That’s not hyperbole. One might ask, What “other things” was John talking about? How about the stars, for example? Yes, Jesus created them. There is Scripture to prove it. And He gave them all names. I’ll speak about that in a later chapter, even describing how many millions of libraries it would take just to contain a listing of all those stars, and their names, that exist in known space. And who knows what might exist beyond known space? (Of course, I think we both know who knows!)

Enough said! Or should I say *not enough said*? Would you join me daily in exploring the wonders of the nature and names of Jesus? Let’s begin by spending “*A Month in the*

Son” together. Just one month to begin with. Perhaps after that, this could become a monthly habit. If you need to stretch it out longer than a month at the start, that’s fine. *Bask in the Son as long as you like.* If you discover something new about Jesus not on my lists (whether it concerns Christ’s nature or His names in Scripture that I might’ve missed), email me your discovery at Jesus@everyhome.org.

But critical to our journey—before we get started I need to explain to you our two main objectives for the journey: first, to “*magnify* Christ’s nature,” and second, to “*glorify* Christ’s names.”

Dick Eastman,
Colorado Springs, Colorado

A MONTH IN THE SON

Magnify His Nature!

Christ is to the souls of men what the sun is to the world. He is the center and source of all spiritual light, warmth, life, health, growth, beauty, and fertility.

. . . Like the sun, He is free to all. All may look at Him, and drink health out of His light.

Hebrews 1:3 TPT

To sum up the Son is not an easy thing to do! But I feel compelled to try! After Mary, the mother of Jesus, received the promise of the coming Messiah from the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:28–49), she sang: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. . . . For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name” (verses 46–47, 49 NKJV). To *magnify* is “to make greater in size, status or degree.” Our English word *magnify* comes from the Latin *magnifcare*: “to make much of” or “to esteem highly.”¹ A. W. Tozer said, “You can’t make God big but you can see God big!”² As together we spend “*A Month in the Son*,” our goal is to see God big through the prism of His Son.

In the pages that follow, we will explore the wonders of the nature and names of Jesus. Each day we spend during our “*Month in the Son*,” a chapter will help us explore the wonders of a foundational aspect of Christ’s nature and character. Each chapter will then be followed by a list of names and phrases of the Lord from Scripture (for meditation, praise and prayer) that describe the wonders of all Christ is to His followers. (More about these lists of names, and how to apply them in daily prayer, will be shared in a moment.)

The primary goal in the pages ahead is both to explore and to experience the awesome wonder of Jesus Christ in new ways. *Wonder* by definition is “a person, thing, or event

A Month in the Son

¹Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “magnify.”

²A. W. Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship?: A Call to True Worship* (Camp Hill, Pa.: WingSpread Publishers, 1985), n.p.

that causes astonishment and admiration.” Jesus is the personification of a Person who causes astonishment and admiration. Wonder is likewise “the feeling of surprise and awe aroused by something unexpected or incredible.”³ Jesus is full of awe-inspiring surprises and incredible blessings for His followers. He is the essence of astonishment and admiration. Quite simply, Jesus is awesome!

As you turn the pages that follow, may I suggest that you are not reading a book as much as embarking on a journey? I’ll be making that journey with you. And when we get to the end, we will discover it is just the beginning. *But first, some very important words about exploring the wonders of Christ’s names.*

Glorify His Name!

“The syllables of your name murmur like a meadow brook. No wonder everyone loves to say your name!”

Song of Songs 1:3 MSG

Why do the Scriptures share so many different names or descriptive phrases of the Lord? Luis de Leon, Augustinian friar and theologian (1527–1591), offers a most interesting observation. Of course, living in sixteenth-century Spain, Leon lacked the many Bible translations and other resources we have today. Yet, from his knowledge of Scripture, he wrote: “Christ is given so many names because of his limitless greatness and the treasury of his very rich perfections and with them the host of functions and other benefits which are born in him and spread over us. Just as they cannot be embraced by the soul’s vision, so much less can a single word name them.”⁴

As you seek to glorify the names of Christ daily, keep in mind that a simple dictionary definition of *name* reads: “a word or words by which an entity is designated and distinguished from others.” The many expressions describing Christ in the chapters that follow clearly distinguish our Lord from all others. Andrew Murray, in his classic work, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, wrote:

What is a person’s name? It is a word or expression in which a person is represented to us. When I mention or hear a name, it brings to mind the whole man, what I know of him, and also the impression he has made on me. . . . His name

³Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “wonder.”

⁴Luis de Leon (1527–1591), *The Names of Christ* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984), 63.

is the symbol of his power. And so each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. The name of Christ is the expression of everything He has done and everything He is and lives to do as our Mediator.⁵

My Anchor in Jesus

A delight of my daily prayer times over the years is to have discovered the significance of bringing these names of the Lord into my devotional times from day to day. This began four decades ago, when I initiated a habit of keeping a daily journal. That habit continues to this day, almost fifteen thousand entries later (in multiple three-ring binders).

Several months into developing this journaling habit, I began noticing in my daily Bible readings numerous descriptive phrases describing our Lord—the promised Messiah. I began compiling a list of these names and phrases that I would refer to often in my daily times of prayer. Soon thereafter, another habit emerged—that of writing into my journal one of those names or phrases daily, claiming that specific expression (and what it conveyed) as my anchor in Jesus for that day. Over ensuing years, and using a typical “through-the-Bible annual reading guide,” I have read and prayed through various translations of Scripture, which significantly expanded my list. I would frequently notice the nuanced ways various translators would describe the wonders of our Lord’s names. Before long, I organized the list alphabetically and ultimately compiled it in a 31-day format. Also of note, although numerous expressions on the daily lists in this book come from the Old Testament, keep in mind that God was “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19) and that any reference to “the Lord” in the Old Testament also refers to Christ. Paul made it clear that all the “fullness” of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ (Colossians 2:9).

The day-by-day listing that follows, consisting of 868 names or expressions describing our Lord, is the result. Because they are presented in a 31-day format (with a daily list following each chapter in this book and its specific theme) you can select some or all of that day’s list as fuel for prayer, praise and meditation. To merely read through an entire list prayerfully for a particular day, pausing to highlight one or two names you specifically claim as significant for that day’s challenges, is easily done in five minutes or less. If you see a specific name that has special meaning for you that day, you might circle it and write the date beside it. (We’ve allowed space for this on the list pages.) And if you do this monthly, you won’t come back to that day’s list for another 31 days. By then it will be like starting afresh if you decide to make this a continuing habit.

I suggest doing this in your daily quiet times of prayer for at least several months just to see how such a habit might impact your prayer life. To me, this is worth sacrificing

⁵Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (New Kensington, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1981), 73.

some of your usual television watching, social networking or other Twitter-consuming moments that too often occupy significant portions of our days. Wise is the statement I heard recently: “Facebook proves that Christians in America have plenty of time to spend in prayer.” And as you meditate on the nature of Christ and the wonders of His names, consider adding your own characteristics, thoughts or qualities about Jesus to your personal list as they come to mind. Ask yourself the question, “Who is Jesus to me this very day?” Let me know what you discover afresh by emailing me at Jesus@everyhome.org.

GOING DEEPER

At the conclusion of each of the 31 main chapter themes on the nature of Christ that follow, I suggest four practical steps to go deeper in your pursuit of these qualities, including ways to apply the names of Jesus listed for each day. These four steps include:

- 1. EXPLORE:** To *explore* means “to look into closely; examine or search carefully; investigate.”⁶ In your daily quiet times, meditate on that specific day’s primary theme describing Jesus. Specifically, meditate on one or more of the passages of Scripture in that chapter.
- 2. EXPERIENCE:** To *experience* involves any “activity that includes training and knowledge, skill, or practice resulting from such activity.”⁷ Pray specifically for a personal revelation of how each day’s quality of Christ relates to your life, family or others in your sphere of influence. Take this theme into your day. You may wish to write down one of the Scriptures in this lesson to memorize throughout the day.
- 3. EXPRESS:** To *express* is “to put into words; to picture; to give expression to one’s feelings or imagination.”⁸ During your daily quiet times, consider investing five to ten minutes to journal your thoughts as they relate to that day’s theme. This will provide you a source to return to daily to record your impressions as you spend your “Month in the Son.” This could well begin a habit that lasts a lifetime. And think about this—it’s all about Jesus!
- 4. EXALT:** To *exalt* means “to praise; glorify; extol—to raise on high; elevate, lift up.”⁹ Devote a portion of your daily prayer encounter to verbally glorify the Lord. You can pray, praise, meditate or even sing through each day’s list rather easily, and even in just a few minutes of time. And as suggested earlier, keep a pen nearby and circle any specific name you wish to claim that day, even noting the date by that name. Remember, Jesus told His disciples to “ask anything in my name” and He would respond (John 14:13–14).

⁶Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “explore.”

⁷Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “experience.”

⁸Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “express.”

⁹Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “exalt.”

— Day 1 —

THE SUPREME JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Supremacy

Christ is to the souls of men what the sun is to the world. He is the center and source of all spiritual light, warmth, life, health, growth, beauty, and fertility. . . . Like the sun, He is free to all. All may look at Him, and drink health out of His light.

J. C. RYLE

SO THIS IS JESUS!

We begin at the conclusion. And the conclusion is really just the beginning. As we begin our journey in exploring the wonders of the nature and names of Jesus, there is nothing more central to our quest than recognizing and pursuing the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He is first and foremost the *Supreme Jesus*. I suggest the beginning is the conclusion because in the end one can say nothing more than that Christ is fully, categorically and emphatically *supreme*. He is supreme from the outset, He will be supreme through every aspect of our journey, and He will be supreme in the end. And of course, there really is no end! Eternity is forever, and Christ is eternally supreme!

In our quest to know Christ more intimately, as together we spend “*A Month in the Son*,” we will quickly realize there is no theme we might address concerning Christ’s nature, character or essence that is not cause for adding the qualifier *supreme*.

Further, to amplify these qualities, we will explore, pray and praise our way through the many names and phrases that describe our Lord in Scripture—all 868 that I have

catalogued over the years from multiple Bible translations during my prayer times. And the summary of it all is the unimaginable, incredible, indescribable, incomprehensible supremacy of Christ. As John R. W. Stott wisely wrote: “The riches of Christ are unsearchable. . . . Like the earth, they are too vast to explore, like the sea, too deep to fathom. They are untraceable, inexhaustible, illimitable, inscrutable and incalculable. What is certain about the wealth Christ has and gives is that we shall never come to an end of it.”¹ But that won’t stop us from pursuing Him! Oh, dear friend, there is so much more!

The Centerpiece of Everything

What exactly do we mean by “supreme”? *Supreme* simply means “most excellent; highest in rank, power and authority; utmost; ultimate; superior.” Synonyms for *supreme* abound, and each aptly applies to the *Supreme Jesus*. Some include: “paramount, matchless, unrivaled, unparalleled, unsurpassed, unequalled, unexcelled, dominant, indomitable, omnipresent, preeminent, unsurpassable, flawless, incomparable, exceptional, invaluable, and magnanimous.”²

The writer to the Hebrew believers uniquely highlighted Christ’s supremacy in declaring:

So, my dear Christian friends . . . take a good hard look at Jesus. He’s the centerpiece of everything we believe, faithful in everything God gave him to do. Moses was also faithful, but Jesus gets far more honor. . . . Moses did a good job in God’s house, but it was all servant work, getting things ready for what was to come. Christ as [God’s] Son is in charge of the house.

Hebrews 3:1–6 MSG

To refer to Christ as the “centerpiece of everything” is to speak of His supremacy. In writing to the Ephesian believers, Paul admonishes: “So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. . . . You are members of God’s family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself” (Ephesians 2:19–20 NLT).

Here Paul clearly states that the *cornerstone* is Christ Himself. A key definition of *cornerstone* reads: “The basic, essential, or most important part; the foundation.”³ A cornerstone for a new building typically represents a stone that forms part of the corner of a

Day 1: The Supreme Jesus

¹John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), ii.

²*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “supreme.”

³*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “cornerstone.”

building, especially a foundation stone, usually inscribed with the date and other details of the placing of the stone. Most often a cornerstone is placed in a building during a ceremony that marks the building's beginning. This adds to our definition of the supremacy of Christ. He is not only the beginning of the building; He is the building itself.

Supreme over All!

The supremacy of Christ cannot be overstated. It is, as I've suggested, the beginning and the conclusion, and everything in between. It's the reality of all realities! Dietrich Bonhoeffer, most remembered for his definitive book *The Cost of Discipleship*, wrote: "In Jesus Christ the reality of God entered into the reality of this world. . . . Henceforth one can speak neither of God nor of the world without speaking of Jesus Christ."⁴

Perhaps Scripture's most significant insights on the supremacy of Christ are found in this passage from the apostle Paul's letter to the Colossian believers:

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is *supreme over all creation*, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. . . . He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

Colossians 1:15–18 NLT

Especially make note of Paul's use of the word *everything*. *Everything* means just that—*every thing*! *Everything* is defined as being "all that exists; all that relates to the subject; and all that is important."⁵ As someone wisely said, "All means all and that's all, all means!"

Charles Spurgeon was arguably one of the greatest pulpit orators of all time. He was known for saying he would take any text from the Bible and proceed immediately to the cross. Highlighting his convictions on the supremacy of Christ, Spurgeon once told his congregation, "I sometimes wonder that you do not get tired of my preaching, because I do nothing but hammer away on this one nail. With me it is, year after year, 'None but Jesus!'"⁶

⁴Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Witness to Jesus Christ* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 238.

⁵*Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. "everything."

⁶Charles Spurgeon, *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 37* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Delmarva Publications, 2013), n.p.

And that will basically be the theme of our journey together as we enjoy our “*Month in the Son*”! Jesus is everything! He is supreme! He is extraordinary. He is incomparable! When our journey is completed, may our heads spin in wonder, reverence and delight as one word comes to mind: *Awesome!*

A Prayer for Today

Jesus, my supreme Lord and God, I humbly bow before You today. I recognize Your ultimate supremacy over all things in heaven and all things on earth. God, I know that in Your fullness You chose to live as Christ. Through Him, You reconciled everything to Yourself—including me! Your Son, indeed, is the centerpiece of everything: everything we believe, everything we long for, everything we live for. Search my heart today, oh Lord. I want You to reign supreme in my life just as You reign over all creation. May every part of my life be wholly submitted to Your supremacy. In Your supreme name I pray, Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE SUPREME JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Remember—these four steps, as explained more fully on page 11, are suggested to help you apply this quality of Christ to your own life.

1. **EXPLORE:** Take time to meditate on this quality of Christ. Use Scriptures in this chapter to get started.
2. **EXPERIENCE:** Turn your meditation into prayer that this quality might impact your life today. Pray the above prayer to begin.
3. **EXPRESS:** During your quiet time, take a moment to journal your thoughts, even if briefly.
4. **EXALT:** Pray, praise or even spontaneously sing your way through today’s list of the names of Jesus. It only requires a few minutes.

GLORIFY HIS NAME

Those who know your *name* will trust in you, for you,
LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

PSALM 9:10 NIV, *emphasis added*

A to Z (Revelation 1:8 MSG)

Adonai-Jehovah (Sovereign Lord)
(Genesis 15:2, 8 NLT)

Advocate, An (1 John 2:1 NKJV)

Alive Forevermore (Revelation
1:18 NKJV)

All and in All (Colossians
3:11 NKJV)

All I Want In Heaven (Psalm
73:25 MSG)

All I Want on Earth (Psalm
73:25 MSG)

All That Matters (Colossians
3:11 NLT)

Almighty One, The (Revelation
1:8 NLT)

Alpha and Omega (Revelation
1:8 NIV)

Altogether Lovely (Song of
Solomon 5:16 NKJV)

Always and Ever Sovereign (Psalm
102:12 MSG)

Amazing Counselor (Isaiah
9:6 MSG)

Ancient of Days, The (Daniel
7:13 NKJV)

Angel of His Presence, The (Isaiah
63:9 NKJV)

Anointed Leader, The (Daniel
9:25 MSG)

Anointed One (1 Timothy 2:5 TPT)

**Apostle and High Priest of
Our Confession, The** (Hebrews
3:1 NKJV)

Arm of the Lord (Isaiah 51:9 NKJV)

Armed and Battle-Ready (Psalm
24:8 MSG)

As Rivers of Water in a Dry Place
(Isaiah 32:2 NKJV)

Assurance of Glory (Colossians
1:27 NLT)

Astonishing Gift (2 Corinthians
9:15 TPT)

Atoning Sacrifice for our Sins (1
John 2:2 NIV)

Attorney (Job 16:19 MSG)

**Author and Finisher of Our Faith,
The** (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV)

Author of Eternal Salvation, The
(Hebrews 5:9 NKJV)

Author of Life, The (Acts 3:15 NLT)

Day 2

THE AWESOME JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Awesomeness

Be sure . . . that your faculty of wonder is used in holy things; let your astonishment bless God.

CHARLES SPURGEON

SOME QUALITIES OF CHRIST'S NATURE AND CHARACTER, His very essence, we can only observe. Other qualities we can emulate. For example, we can desire to be more compassionate, humble, prayerful or selfless. These are but a few of the qualities of Christ we will look at in the pages that follow. However, some aspects of Christ's essence we might describe as "wonder qualities." For example, we cannot emulate (i.e., strive to imitate) His supremacy. We can't seek to be more *supreme* as we might seek to be more *compassionate*. We can only observe and encounter Christ's supremacy. The same can be said about His awesomeness. We cannot be more *awesome*. He alone is awesome and supreme in these and every other quality we might examine of His essence. But we can live out the implications of these unique qualities of our Lord, day by day. Today we focus on the "Awesome Jesus"!

Awesome beyond Words

Awesome by definition means: "Awe-inspiring; exalted, wonderful, remarkable, extraordinary; magnificent."¹ This describes a person or experience that is stirring or deeply

Day 2: The Awesome Jesus

¹Webster's New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. "awesome."

moving. *Awe* is defined as “a feeling of fearful or profound respect or wonder inspired by the superiority or grandeur of a person.”²

How awesome is Jesus in your life right now? Do you see Him as awe-inspiring, wonderful, extraordinary and magnificent? The psalmist gave us this challenge: “Be in awe before his majesty. Be in awe before such power and might! Come worship wonderful Yahweh, arrayed in all his splendor, bowing in worship as he appears in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29:2 TPT). Elsewhere the psalmist declared: “The Lord God Most High is astonishing, awesome beyond words!” (Psalm 47:2 TPT).

The purpose of the pages that follow is to help you see Jesus in all His awesome wonder. *Wonder* by definition, as briefly mentioned in my introduction, is “a person, thing, or event that causes astonishment and admiration.”³ How awesome is Jesus in your life? Do you long to have a life-altering encounter with the awesomeness of Christ? Puritan revivalist Jonathan Edwards describes just such an experience:

In 1737 I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God as Mediator between God and man and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. . . . I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust and to be full of Christ alone.⁴

Sheer Wonder

Reflect with me a moment on the ancient biblical account of Samson. Most remember Samson for his dying moments when, having been blinded by his enemies after he lost his powers due to disobedience, God restored his strength, and he tore down the temple of Dagon. More of the enemy died in that instance than in Samson’s entire life.

But go back with me prior to Samson’s birth when a heavenly messenger described as “the Angel of God” delivered a promise to the household of Manoah, Samson’s future father. Manoah’s wife had been childless—apparently for years. The Angel of God appeared first to Manoah’s wife. “I know that you are barren and childless,” this divine being declared, “but you’re going to become pregnant and bear a son” (Judges 13:3 MSG). This visitor suddenly disappeared as Manoah’s wife rushed to Manoah to tell him of the promise.

²Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “awe.”

³Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “wonder.”

⁴Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. I-I, rev. (Ingersoll, Ont.: Devoted Publishing, 2019), 78.

“A man of God came to me,” she exclaimed, adding, “He looked like the angel of God—terror laced with glory!” (verse 6 MSG). She then recounted how this divine being had given her a promise just before he disappeared: “You’re pregnant. You’re going to give birth to a son. . . . The boy will be God’s Nazirite from the moment of birth to the day of his death” (verse 7 MSG).

Manoah prays that this supernatural visitor might return to teach him and his wife how to raise this promised Nazirite child. His prayer was answered, and the Lord does return, appearing once again first to Manoah’s wife. Again his wife leaps to her feet and rushes to Manoah, declaring, “He’s back! The man who came to me that day!” Manoah quickly returns with his wife and asks this supernatural being for further help in raising the promised child. Before the Angel of God departs a second time, Manoah has a final question: “What’s your name? When your words come true, we’d like to honor you.” The Angel of God’s response is terse but telling: “What’s this? You ask for my name? You wouldn’t understand—it’s sheer wonder” (Judges 13:17–18 MSG).

Delightfully Mysterious

Manoah and his wife lacked the Scriptures as we have them today—God’s holy Word, the Bible. What an anointed resource to help us explore and experience the awesome wonders of our Lord! May we respond daily to the psalmist’s challenge: “Now, with breathtaking wonder, let everyone worship Yahweh, this awe-inspiring Creator” (Psalm 33:8 TPT). To this, we heed the additional invitation: “Drink deeply of the pleasures of this God. Experience for yourself the joyous mercies he gives to all who turn to hide themselves in him. Worship in awe and wonder.” (Psalm 34:8–9 TPT).

Are you ready to be astonished? Before we continue our journey, the psalmist adds this additional observation: “For God’s mighty miracles astound me! His wonders are so delightfully mysterious that they leave all who seek them astonished” (Psalm 111:2–3 TPT).

I know we are but scratching the surface in trying to explore the awesomeness of Jesus. And the surface is myriad wonders deep! But together, let’s go deeper!

A Prayer for Today

Awaken me, Lord Jesus, to Your goodness inhabiting all things. Awaken me to Your presence in my life and those whom I may encounter today. Awaken me to Your awesome creation. Awaken me to Your awesome wonder that I might bring You greater glory. Awaken me to Your grace in every moment of my day. Capture my attention, Jesus, so that I may spend all my days in astonished awe of You. Amen!

ENCOUNTERING THE AWESOME JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Remember—these four steps, as explained more fully on page 11, are suggested to help you apply this quality of Christ to your own life.

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4. **EXALT:** Pray, praise or even spontaneously sing your way through today's list of the names of Jesus. It only requires a few minutes.

GLORIFY HIS NAME

I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your *name*, O Most High.

Psalm 9:2 NIV, emphasis added

Avenger (Jeremiah 51:36 MSG)

Avenging God (Psalm 94:1 MSG)

Awe-Inspiring God (Psalm 76:7 TPT)

Awesome in Your Sanctuary (Psalm 68:35 NIV)

Balm in Gilead (Jeremiah 8:22 NKJV)

Banner for the Nations, A (Isaiah 11:12 NKJV)

Beautiful Crown, The (Isaiah 28:5 MSG)

Bedrock on which I Stand, The (Psalm 144:1 MSG)

Bedrock under my Feet (Psalm 18:1 MSG)

Beginning, The (Colossians 1:18 NLT)

Beginning and the End (Revelation 1:8 NKJV)

Beginning of the Creation of God, The (Revelation 3:14 NKJV)

Best, The (Psalm 95:3 MSG)

Best Picture of God (2 Corinthians 4:4 MSG)

Bishop of Your Souls (1 Peter 2:25 KJV)

Blessed and Only Almighty God, The (1 Timothy 6:15 NLT)

Blessed and Only Potentate, The (1 Timothy 6:15 NKJV)

Blessed and Undisputed Ruler (1 Timothy 6:15 MSG)

Bouquet of Wildflowers (Song of Solomon 1:14 MSG)

Branch of Righteousness, A (Jeremiah 23:5 NKJV)

Branch of the Lord, The (Isaiah 4:2 NLT)

Bread from Heaven, The (John 6:51 MSG)

Bread of God, The (John 6:33 MSG)

Bread of Life, The (John 6:35 NLT, MSG)

Breathing Room for My Soul (Psalm 62:6 MSG)

Bright Morning Star, The (Revelation 22:16 MSG)

Brighter Than the Brilliance of a Sunrise (Psalm 84:11 TPT)

Brightness after Rain (2 Samuel 23:4 NIV)

— Day 3 —

THE BEAUTIFUL JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Beauty

When you hear the voice of Jesus saying, “Come to me,” pray that God would give you eyes to see Jesus as irresistibly true and beautiful.

JOHN PIPER

OVER THE YEARS, my life has been profoundly impacted by mighty giants of the faith whose lives have challenged me to pursue God in greater dimensions. One of those is Robert Murray McCheyne, a Scottish preacher in the mid-nineteenth century who was passionately consumed with the beauty and wonder of Christ. Referencing Song of Solomon 5:16, McCheyne introduces us to the *Beautiful Jesus*:

You will never find Jesus so precious, as when the world is one vast howling wilderness. Then He is like a rose blooming in the midst of the desolation, or a rock rising above the storm! Do not set your hearts on any of the flowers of this world. They shall all fade and die. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. Jesus never changes. . . . Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!¹

Day 3: The Beautiful Jesus

¹Robert Murray McCheyne, *The Life and Remains, Letters, Lectures, and Poems of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne* (New York: Robert Carter, publisher, 1847), 253.

Dazzling Radiance

Today we turn our attention to the wonders of Christ's beauty. How beautifully do you see Jesus right now? The apostle Paul wrote to Corinthian believers: "Remember, our Message is not about ourselves; we're proclaiming Jesus Christ, the Master. All we are is messengers, errand runners from Jesus for you. It started when God said, "Light up the darkness!" and our lives filled up with light as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ, all bright and beautiful" (2 Corinthians 4:5–6 MSG). The author of Hebrews adds: "The Son is the dazzling radiance of God's splendor" (Hebrews 1:3 TPT). This is beauty to the extreme!

The psalmist likewise spoke about the beauty of the Lord. He wrote: "For God is sheer beauty, all-generous in love, loyal always and ever" (Psalm 100:5 MSG). Elsewhere he declared: "For GOD is great, and worth a thousand Hallelujahs. His terrible beauty makes the gods look cheap. . . . Royal splendor radiates from him, a powerful beauty sets him apart" (Psalm 96:4, 6 MSG). King David in one of his most memorable psalms wrote: "I'm asking GOD for one thing, only one thing: to live with him in his house my whole life long. I'll contemplate his beauty; I'll study at his feet" (Psalm 27:4 MSG).

Meditate for a moment on this expanded definition of *beautiful*: "the quality attributed to what pleases or satisfies the senses; having or possessing beauty; qualities that are especially attractive."² Synonyms include: "loveliness; elegance; magnificence; excellence, attraction, fascination; majesty; value; merit; worth and allurements."³ Indeed, there is no single word or phrase in any definition of *beautiful* that cannot be applied to our Lord.

Occupied with Jesus!

Few historic church leaders have fascinated me as much in their radical devotion to Christ as has Francis of Assisi. Born the son of a wealthy Italian merchant in the late twelfth century, and living only 44 years, Francis forsook all of his inheritance at the age of 27 and founded what would become the Franciscan Order. This humble Italian friar left such a legacy that generations would know him simply by the city of his birth, as Francis of Assisi.

What most marked Assisi's life was his pure passion for Jesus! He was consumed with the beauty of Christ. Such was evident when he wrote to his fellow Franciscans about his beautiful Savior:

²Webster's New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. "beautiful."

³Charlton Laird, *Webster's New World Roget's A-Z Thesaurus* (Cleveland: Wiley and Sons, 2010), s.v. "beautiful."

We should wish for nothing else and have no other desire, we should find no pleasure or delight in anything except in our Creator, Redeemer, and Savior; He alone is true God, perfect, good, all good, every good, and the true and supreme good . . . loving and gentle, kind and understanding.

In this same discourse, Francis elaborated:

Nothing, then, must keep us back, nothing separate us from him, nothing come between us and him. At all times and seasons, in every country and place, every day and all day, we must keep him in our hearts, where we must love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and acclaim, magnify and thank, the most high supreme and eternal God . . . Creator of all and the Savior . . . lovable, delightful and utterly desirable beyond all else, for ever and ever.⁴

Thomas of Celano, a fellow Franciscan and poet, said of Francis: “He was always occupied with Jesus; Jesus he bore in his heart, Jesus in his mouth, Jesus in his ears, Jesus in his eyes, Jesus in his hands, Jesus in the rest of his members.”

Have you ever read the account of a past faith giant and said silently, “I want that—I really want that”? That’s what I feel when I read accounts of Christ seekers like Francis of Assisi. The apostle Paul captured that same intensity. He summed up his entire reason for being with these words: “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Philippians 3:10 NASB). Take time today, and every day, sitting at the feet of Jesus, basking in His beauty!

A Prayer for Today

Beautiful Jesus, I want to spend my life captivated by Your beauty. You are truly beautiful in every way, and Your beauty resonates throughout all creation. Everything about You is beautiful. Everything You do is beautiful. Everything You create is beautiful. Everything You say is beautiful. Today I call to mind specific and personal encounters with Your beauty, that I may meditate on the ways You have revealed Your beauty uniquely to me in the past. I thank You for the beauty with which You have flooded my life; all of it is Yours. May I always truly abound in Your beauty. Amen.

⁴Francis of Assisi, *The Christian Library* (New York: Thomas George, publisher, 1835), 606.

ENCOUNTERING THE BEAUTIFUL JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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4. **EXALT:** Pray, praise or even spontaneously sing your way through today's list of the names of Jesus. It only requires a few minutes.

GLORIFY HIS NAME

Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD;
I will sing praises to your *name*.

Psalm 18:49 NIV 1984, *emphasis added*

Brightness of His Glory, The (Hebrews 1:3 NKJV)	Champion Defender (Psalm 62:2 TPT)	Cliff to Climb (Psalm 31:5 MSG)
Brilliant Lord (Psalm 8:1 MSG)	Champion Friend to Widows (Psalm 68:5 TPT)	Cloud-Enthroned, The (Revelation 14:14 MSG)
Bringer of Peace (Ephesians 2:14 NLT)	Champion Who Initiates and Perfects Our Faith, The (Hebrews 12:2 NLT)	Cloud-Rider (Psalm 68:4 MSG)
Builder of Everything (Hebrews 3:4 NIV)	Chief among Ten Thousand (Song of Solomon 5:10 NKJV)	Commander (Isaiah 55:4 NKJV)
Capstone, The (Psalm 118:22 MSG)	Chief Cornerstone, The (Psalm 118:22 NKJV)	Compassionate God (Deuteronomy 4:31 MSG)
Captain of Our Salvation, The (Hebrews 2:10 KJV)	Chief Foundation Stone, The (1 Peter 2:6 MSG)	Compassionate One, The (Isaiah 49:10 MSG)
Captain of the Host of the Lord (Joshua 5:14 KJV)	Chief Shepherd, The (1 Peter 5:4 NKJV)	Conclusion, The (Revelation 21:6 MSG)
Castle in Which I Live, The (Psalm 18:1 MSG)	Chosen One, The (Luke 23:35 NLT)	Consuming Fire, A (Hebrews 12:29 NKJV)
Catalyst of a Better Covenant, The (Hebrews 8:6 TPT)	Christ, the Power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24 NKJV)	Cornerstone in the Place of Honor, A (1 Peter 2:6 MSG)
Cave to Hide In (Psalm 31:5 MSG)	Christ, Who Is Your Life (Colossians 3:4 NLT)	Cornerstone in Zion, A (1 Peter 2:6 TPT)

— Day 5 —

THE HUMAN JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Humanity

Jesus was God spelling himself out in language humanity could understand.

S. D. GORDON

“**IN THE CHRISTIAN VIEW**, the ultimate evidence for the existence of God is Jesus Christ,” wrote Timothy Keller. He adds:

If there is a God, we characters in his play have to hope that he put some information about himself in the play. But Christians believe he did more than give us information. He wrote himself into the play as the main character in history, when Jesus was born in a manger and rose from the dead.¹

Theologian James I. Packer adds: “The really staggering Christian claim is that Jesus of Nazareth was God made man. . . . The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation.”²

Our journey to explore the wonders of the nature and names of Jesus brings us to our view of the *Human Jesus*.

Day 5: The Human Jesus

¹Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 123.

²J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1973), n.p.

Heaven Meets Earth

The author of Hebrews affirms the significance of the *Human Jesus* throughout his letter. On one occasion he wrote:

Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. . . . Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

Hebrews 2:14–18 NLT

Later in this same letter, more insight is given regarding the profound significance of God taking upon Himself human form in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ:

You are a priest forever . . . who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

Hebrews 5:6–9 NKJV

Theologians refer to Christ’s coming to earth as His incarnation. *Incarnation* is defined as “endowment with a human body; appearance in human form.”³ A simple definition of *human* reads: “having human form or attributes; representative or susceptible to the sympathies and frailties of human nature.” The definition expands: “having or sharing qualities viewed as distinctive of people; member of the human race; a living soul; as being a part of humankind.”⁴ This certainly describes the *Human Jesus*. In referring to Christ as simply the *Word*, the apostle John said of His incarnation: “So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.

³Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “incarnation.”

⁴Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “human.”

And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son” (John 1:14 NLT). Henry Law, mid-nineteenth-century Anglican scholar, summed it up in a single sentence: “In Jesus Christ heaven meets earth and earth ascends to heaven.”⁵

One of the Sheep

Other Bible writers would likewise speak of the profound significance of Christ’s humanity. Paul would tell Colossian believers: “For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority” (Colossians 2:9–10 NLT). Paul would also write to his young colleague Timothy describing Christ’s incarnation as a mystery: “Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16 NLT).

Of this mystery of Christ’s incarnation, Bishop Melito of Sardis in the second century said of Christ:

He appeared as one of the sheep, yet He still remained the Shepherd. He was esteemed a servant, yet He did not renounce His Sonship. He was carried in the womb of Mary, yet arrayed in the nature of his Father. He walked upon the earth, yet He filled heaven.⁶

Christianity is clearly unique among all religions in suggesting the very Creator of the universe came to earth in the form of a man to redeem humankind. John Piper asks:

Does Islam—or any other faith besides Christianity—cherish the crucifixion of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, as the only ground of our acceptance with God? The answer is no. Only Christians “follow the Lamb” who was “slain” as the one and only Redeemer who sit on the “throne” of God (Revelation 14:4; 5:6; 7:17). . . . The closer you get to what makes Christianity ghastly, the closer you get to what makes it glorious.⁷

Are you ready to get closer? Let’s continue our journey. There is so much more to come!

⁵Henry Law, quoted in Calvin Miller, ed., *The Book of Jesus: A Treasury of the Greatest Stories and Writings about Christ*, ed. Calvin Miller (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), n.p.

⁶Bishop Melito of Sardis, *Orthodox Christianity: The Theotokos* (Prof. Kenneth Onapolis, publisher, no city given), 42.

⁷John Piper, Brothers, *We Are Not Professional* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), x.

A Prayer for Today

Jesus, today I come before You to thank You for taking on flesh and blood and walking this earth as one of us. Only in human form could You die and conquer the power of death. Only in a human body could You bear the sufferings of humankind and share their pain. Only in a human body could You truly be “God with us.” As I focus today on Your humanity, I become aware of how deeply I am able to trust You. You truly know, understand and sympathetically share in my humanness. Thank You for Your nearness, Lord Jesus. Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE HUMAN JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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GLORIFY HIS NAME

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his *name*; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

Psalm 29:2 NIV, *emphasis added*

Eternal King, The (Jeremiah 10:10 MSG)

Eternal Life (1 John 5:20 NLT, NKJV)

Eternal Life-Giver (1 John 1:2 TPT)

Eternally Blessed God, The (Romans 9:5 NKJV)

Ever and Always (Psalm 45:6 MSG)

Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6 NKJV)

Everlasting King (Jeremiah 10:10 NKJV)

Exact Likeness of God, The (2 Corinthians 4:4 NLT)

Exalted God, The (1 Timothy 6:15 TPT)

Faithful and True Witness, The (Revelation 3:14 NLT)

Faithful God, A (Deuteronomy 32:4 NLT)

Father of Compassion (2 Corinthians 1:3 NIV)

Father of Mercies, The (2 Corinthians 1:3 NKJV)

Father of Orphans (Psalm 68:5 MSG)

Fearsome (Job 25:2 MSG)

Finisher of Our Faith (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV)

First and Last and Everything in Between (Isaiah 44:6 MSG)

Firstborn among Many Brethren, The (Romans 8:29 NKJV)

Firstborn from the Dead, The (Colossians 1:18 NKJV)

Firstborn Heir in Resurrection (Colossians 1:18 TPT)

Firstborn over All Creation, The (Colossians 1:15 NKJV)

Firstfruits of Those Who Have Fallen Asleep, The (1 Corinthians 15:20 NKJV)

First of God's Creation (Revelation 3:14 MSG)

First on the Scene (Isaiah 41:4 MSG)

Flame, A (Isaiah 10:17 NLT)

Focus of My Delight (Matthew 17:5 MSG)

Forerunner, The (Hebrews 6:20 NKJV)

Forever Exalted (Psalm 92:8 NIV)

Forgiving Redeemer (1 John 2:1 TPT)

— Day 6 —

THE DIVINE JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Divinity

Two thousand years ago there was One here on this earth who lived the grandest life that ever has been lived yet—a life that every thinking man, with deeper or shallower meaning, has agreed to call divine.

FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON

WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT CHRIST WAS INDEED HUMAN, and fully so, we must likewise recognize that He was and is fully God as well. Novatian, a Roman theologian and scholar (c. 235), said of Christ: “He is indeed proved to be the Son of His Father. But He is found to be both Lord and God of all else. . . . For He is God, and all things are subjected to Him.”¹ Almost a century after Novatian wrote these words, the framers of the Nicene Creed (AD 325) would declare, “Christ is One Lord, only begotten Son of God; begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.” This brings our journey of a “*Month in the Son*” to explore the wonders of the *Divine Jesus*.

Most readers would have a basic understanding of the meaning of *divine*, but allow me to expand on it a bit. A more complete definition of *divine* reads: “That which suggests the nature of, or is associated with or derived from God; connotes supreme greatness;

Day 6: The Divine Jesus

¹Novatian, *The Sacred Writings of Novatian* (Altenmunster, Germany: Jazzybee Verlag Jurgen Beck, no year given), n.p.

belonging to or coming from God; Almighty, Author, Creator, Supreme Being.” Also: “Of, relating to, or proceeding directly from God; being a deity (i.e., the divine Savior).”²

Dazzling Radiance

The apostle Paul was clear in his writings that although Christ was human, He was fully divine. In his second letter to the Corinthian believers, he wrote: “At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:16–17 NLT). Paul then highlights his clear understanding of the deity of Christ:

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18–19 NLT

Here we especially note Paul’s explanation that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.” To believers in Rome, Paul would directly claim Jesus to be God: “Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. *And he is God*, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen” (Romans 9:5 NLT, emphasis added). Paul would likewise write Titus: “We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of *our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ*, will be revealed” (Titus 2:12b–13 NLT, emphasis added).

Peter also can be added to our list of those apostles who referenced Christ as God and Savior: “I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of *Jesus Christ, our God and Savior*” (2 Peter 1:1 NLT, emphasis added).

The author of Hebrews likewise adds his voice in declaring Christ as fully divine when writing: “The Son is the dazzling radiance of God’s splendor, the exact expression of God’s true nature—his mirror image! He holds the universe together and expands it by the mighty power of his spoken word” (Hebrews 1:3 TPT). Christ is indeed God. I agree with John Piper: “God without Christ is no God. God-in-Christ is the only true God

²Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “divine.”

and the only path to joy. If we would see and savor the glory of God, we must see and savor Christ.”³

The Bottom Line

Of importance to note is that Christ Himself declared He was God. He told harassing Jewish authorities, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner” (John 5:19 NKJV). Later, when speaking with the Pharisees, Christ described His disciples as sheep who follow Him and even boldly declared that He gave them eternal life and that they would never perish (John 10:27–28 NKJV). Jesus further highlighted His deity in saying, “I and My Father are one” (verse 30 NKJV).

One of history’s oft-repeated fallacies comes from those who say Christ was merely a great human being, a wonderful moral teacher and even a prophet, but not divine. C. S. Lewis addressed this fallacy in his classic work *Mere Christianity*:

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.⁴

May we choose this day, and every day, to fall at the feet of our Lord and God—the *Divine Jesus*!

³John Piper, *Future Grace* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Desiring God Foundation, revised edition, published by Multnomah Books, 1995), xiii.

⁴C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Geoffrey Bles UK, Macmillan Publishers, div. of HarperCollins, 1952), n.p.

A Prayer for Today

Jesus—divine Lord, divine Savior, one true God—I bow before You today as I gaze upon Your divine glory. You alone are God and divine Lord of the universe. I submit all my life to You, knowing that You hold me close to your heart. Your ways are perfect. You are fully God and the sovereign heavenly King. Thank You, God, for reconciling us to Yourself through Jesus. Thank You for coming into our world that we might encounter You in Your divine majesty. I invite You to be entirely divine in my own life today—and make me ever more like You. Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE DIVINE JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Remember—these four steps, as explained more fully on page 11, are suggested to help you apply this quality of Christ to your own life.

1. **EXPLORE:** Take time to meditate on this quality of Christ. Use Scriptures in this chapter to get started.
2. **EXPERIENCE:** Turn your meditation into prayer that this quality might impact your life today. Pray the above prayer to begin.
3. **EXPRESS:** During your quiet time, take a moment to journal your thoughts, even if briefly.
4. **EXALT: PRAY,** praise or even spontaneously sing your way through today's list of the names of Jesus. It only requires a few minutes.

GLORIFY HIS NAME

I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the *name* of the LORD Most High.

Psalm 7:17 NIV 198432, *emphasis added*

Fortified Tower, A (Proverbs 18:10 NIV)

Fortress (Psalm 18:2 NLT)

Foundation, A (Isaiah 28:16 NKJV)

Foundation in Zion, A (Isaiah 28:16 MSG)

Fountain of Cascading Light, A (Psalm 36:9 MSG)

Fountain of Fresh Flowing Waters, The (Jeremiah 2:13 MSG)

Fountain of Life (Psalm 36:9 NIV)

Fountain of Living Water, The (Jeremiah 17:13 NLT)

Fragrant Offering, A (Ephesians 5:2 NIV)

Friend Who Sticks Closer Than a Brother, A (Proverbs 18:24 NKJV)

Garden of Renown, A (Ezekiel 34:29 NKJV)

Gate, The (John 10:1–2 MSG)

Generous in Love (Psalm 100:5 MSG)

Gift God Has for You, The (John 4:10 NLT)

Giver of Great Victory (2 Samuel 22:51 NLT)

Glorious Crown (Isaiah 28:5 NLT)

Glorious God (Acts 7:2 NLT)

Glorious Lord, The (Isaiah 33:21 KJV)

Glorious Throne to His Father's House, A (Isaiah 22:23 NKJV)

Glory-Fortress (Psalm 59:16 TPT)

Glory of Your People Israel, The (Luke 2:32 NLT)

God about to Arrive, The (Revelation 1:4 MSG)

God and Master of the Spirits of the Prophets, The (Revelation 22:6 MSG)

God Awesome (Isaiah 35:2 MSG)

God-Enthroned (Revelation 21:5 TPT)

God Full of Compassion, A (Psalm 86:15 NKJV)

God Immense and Powerful and Awesome (Deuteronomy 10:17 MSG)

— Day 29 —

THE PREEMINENT JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Preeminence

His Son is God the Word, and Wisdom, and Truth, and Righteousness—and everything else that the sacred Scriptures call him when speaking of God.

ORIGEN (AD 248)

“WHEN THE DRAMA OF HISTORY IS OVER,” wrote German theologian Helmut Thielicke, “Jesus Christ will stand alone on the stage. All the great figures of history . . . will realize that they have been actors in a drama produced by another.”¹

Our journey of enjoying “*A Month in the Son*” brings us to a place of exploring and experiencing Christ’s awesome preeminence. He is the *Preeminent Jesus*. *Preeminent* has a variety of meanings, including: “above all others; excelling others; excellent; surpassing all others; supreme; superb; marvelous.”² *Preeminent* is related to *predominant*, meaning: “having ascendancy,” “dominating all others.”³ Admittedly, the words *supreme* and *preeminent* seem to define each other. Yet, I feel very comfortable referring to Christ as supremely preeminent and preeminently supreme.

Day 29: The Preeminent Jesus

¹Helmut Thielicke, *The Waiting Father: Sermons on the Parables of Jesus* (Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press, 1957), 89.

²*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “preeminent.”

³*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “predominant.”

A Road to Christ

The apostle Paul would combine the two words *supreme* and *preeminent* when he described Christ to Colossian believers: “He is also the head [the life-source and leader] of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will occupy the first place [He will stand supreme and be preeminent] in everything” (Colossians 1:18 AMP).

Paul wrote this to Christians in Philippi:

So God lifted him up to the highest place. God gave him the name that is above every name. When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone will kneel down to worship him. Everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will kneel down to worship him. Everyone’s mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord. And God the Father will receive the glory.

Philippians 2:9–11 NIRV

A phrase that especially stands out in Paul’s message to the Philippian believers are the ten words: “God gave him the name that is above every name!” No personality in the history of humankind has had the impact of the carpenter’s son from Nazareth named Jesus. His preeminence is uncontested and His supremacy undisputed.

John Knox, founder of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and key leader of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland in the mid-1500s, had such great spiritual influence that Mary, Queen of Scots, once said: “I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”⁴

The preeminence of Christ was central to the preaching and writings of Knox. Of his preaching, it was said: “Christ is in every noun, in every adverb, in every adjective, in every participle. . . .”⁵

The same was true of Charles Spurgeon. He wrote: “Whatever subject I preach, I do not stop until I reach the Savior, the Lord Jesus, for in Him are all things.” To fellow preachers, Spurgeon offered this challenge: “From every text of Scripture there is a road to Christ. And my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, now, what is the road to Christ? I have never found a text that did not have a road to Christ in it.”⁶

⁴John Knox, quoted in Dave Earley, *21 Most Effective Prayers of the Bible* (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour Publishing, Inc., 2005), n.p.

⁵Bryant, *Christ Is Now*, 118.

⁶Charles H. Spurgeon, *2017 Fall Quarter Evangelical Sunday School Lesson Commentary*, edited by Lance Colkmire (Cleveland, Tenn.: Pathway Press, 2017), 388.

Supreme Soul Seeker

Throughout our “Month in the Son” together, I have included hundreds of names and phrases that describe our awesome Lord. Certainly, one of the most significant of these is the simple phrase—*the Lord Jesus Christ!* The Preeminent Jesus is seen in each word of this name.

First, we must not skip too quickly over the definite article *the*, which begins His name. A key definition of *the* reads: “that (one) designated or identified” and “that (one) considered outstanding.”⁷ There clearly is only one Person in the entire universe who is worthy of the title—*the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Next is the name *Lord*, meaning, “one having great power and authority; ruler; master.”⁸ We have shared multiple examples of Scripture in the previous pages to describe Christ as “Lord of All”! Luke writes in his apostolic account of the growing early Church, “This is the same message that God gave to the people of Israel, when he sent Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, to offer peace to them” (Acts 10:36 CEV).

Then comes the beautiful expression we have spoken of so often in these pages—*Jesus!* This name literally means “Jehovah saves!”⁹ When Christ came in the flesh to live among humankind, He clearly stated His mission when He told Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10 NKJV). Christ is the supreme soul seeker!

Finally, Jesus is called the Christ. This title comes from the Greek word translated “anointed one.” In Hebrew, the equivalent to the name *Christ* is *Messiah*. The apostle Peter, while preaching to a Jerusalem crowd on the Day of Pentecost, declared, “Can’t you see it? God has resurrected Jesus, and we all have seen him! Then God exalted him to his right hand upon the throne of highest honor” (Acts 2:32–33 TPT). Peter quickly adds, “Now everyone in Israel can know for certain that Jesus, whom you crucified, is the one God has made both Lord and the Messiah” (Acts 2:36 TPT).

Paul provides some final, vital words of Christ’s Messianic preeminence. Describing his prayers for Ephesian believers, he wrote:

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power . . . the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.

⁷Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “the.”

⁸Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “lord.”

⁹Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 274.

Have you seen Jesus today in His supreme preeminence? Puritan revivalist Jonathan Edwards provides this worthy summary to our view of the *Preeminent Jesus*: “Jesus Christ has true excellency, and so great an excellency, that when you come to truly see Him, you look no further, but your mind rests there.”¹⁰

A Prayer for Today

Preeminent Jesus, You reign over all! You are above all things, within all things, first in all things. Jesus, my Lord and Savior, I invite You today and every day to be preeminent in my life. May I wake each morning conscious of Your supreme preeminence. Just as the great preachers followed the texts of Scripture discovering every road that leads to You, I pray I would find new roads to Your preeminent presence every moment of my life. Be above all things in my heart. Reign above all things in my soul. Be first, O Lord, in all I think and do! I worship You alone! Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE PREEMINENT JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Remember—these four steps, as explained more fully on page 11, are suggested to help you apply this quality of Christ to your own life.

1. **EXPLORE:** Take time to meditate on this quality of Christ. Use Scriptures in this chapter to get started.
2. **EXPERIENCE:** Turn your meditation into prayer that this quality might impact your life today. Pray the above prayer to begin.
3. **EXPRESS:** During your quiet time, take a moment to journal your thoughts, even if briefly.
4. **EXALT:** Pray, praise or even spontaneously sing your way through today’s list of the names of Jesus. It only requires a few minutes.

¹⁰Jonathan Edwards, quoted in Isabella D. Bunn, *444 Surprising Quotes about Jesus* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2006), n.p.

GLORIFY HIS NAME

Your *name*, O LORD, endures forever, your renown,
O LORD, through all generations.

Psalm 135:13 NIV 1984, *emphasis added*

Stone in Zion, A (1 Peter 2:6 MSG)

Stone of Israel, The (Genesis
49:24 NKJV)

Stone of Stumbling (1 Peter
2:8 NKJV)

Stone the Builders Rejected, The (1
Peter 2:7 NIV)

**Stone the Workmen Threw Out,
The** (1 Peter 2:7 MSG)

Stone to Be Proud Of, A (1 Peter
2:7 MSG)

Streams of Water in the Desert
(Isaiah 32:2 NIV)

Strength to the Needy, A (Isaiah
25:4 NKJV)

Strength to the Poor, A (Isaiah
25:4 NKJV)

Strong God (Isaiah 9:6 MSG)

Stronghold, A (Nahum 1:7 NKJV)

Stronghold in Times of Trouble
(Psalm 9:9 NIV)

Stronghold of My Life, The (Psalm
27:1 NIV)

Stronghold of Salvation (Psalm
31:3 TPT)

Strong King (Psalm 99:4 MSG)

Strong Lord, A (Psalm 89:8 KJV)

Strong Tower, A (Psalm 61:3 NKJV)

Strong Warrior, A (Zephaniah
3:17 MSG)

Sun and Our Shield (Psalm
84:11 NLT)

Sun and Shield, A (Psalm
84:11 NKJV)

Sun of Righteousness, The (Malachi
4:2 NKJV)

Sure Foundation, A (Isaiah
28:16 NKJV)

Surety, A (Hebrews 7:22 NKJV)

**Sustaining All Things by His
Powerful Word** (Hebrews 1:3 NIV)

Sword of Your Majesty, The
(Deuteronomy 33:29 NKJV)

Sword Who Brings Triumph, The
(Deuteronomy 33:29 MSG)

Teacher (Matthew 23:8 NKJV)

Teacher and Lord (John 13:13 NLT)

Day 31

THE INCOMPARABLE JESUS

Exploring the Wonders of Christ's Greatness

Everything about God is great, vast, incomparable. He never forgets, never fails, never falters, never forfeits His word. To every declaration of promise or prophecy the Lord has exactly adhered.

A. W. PINK

SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR, theologian and professor Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661) wrote of Jesus:

Were there ten thousand millions of heavens created above these highest heavens, and again as many above them, and as many above them, till angels were wearied with counting, it were but too low a seat to fix the princely throne of that Lord Jesus (whose ye are) above them all.¹

Some 21 centuries before Rutherford's birth in 1600, Ethan the Ezrahite (c. 539 BC) would seemingly speak in the Psalms of Rutherford's wearied angels when he wrote these words in Psalm 89:

All heaven will praise your great wonders, LORD; myriads of angels will praise you for your faithfulness. For who in all of heaven can compare with the LORD?

Day 31: The Incomparable Jesus

¹Samuel Rutherford, *Joshua redivivus: or, three hundred and fifty-two religious letters* (Glasgow, Scotland: Andrew Young, 1824), 349.

What mightiest angel is anything like the LORD? The highest angelic powers stand in awe of God. He is far more awesome than all who surround his throne.

Psalm 89:5–7 NLT

Everything Extraordinary

We come to the end of our journey together in spending “*A Month in the Son.*” But the end of our journey is really just a beginning. There is so much more of Jesus waiting to be discovered. I invite you to begin again with Day 1 in this book. What a glorious habit—spending each new day “basking in the Son”! But first we need to saturate ourselves in a revelation of the *Incomparable Jesus!*

Incomparable, of course, immediately suggests that whatever you are speaking about in using that word means nothing can compare to it. A fuller definition of *incomparable* reads: “having no comparison or no equal; matchless, unequaled, unmatched, unparalleled, unrivaled, unsurpassable, exceptional, extraordinary, eminent beyond comparison; not suitable for any comparison.”²

Christ meets any and all definitions, descriptions, adjectives, modifiers or any other manner of descriptions when we speak of Him as the *Incomparable Jesus!* Napoleon Bonaparte was clearly correct when he said of Jesus: “Everything in Christ astonishes me! Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare Him and by which I am able to explain Him. Here is everything extraordinary.”³

Nothing but Jesus

In every way, Christ is supremely incomparable. No other religious founder, philosopher, sage, prophet, statesman or any other hero or heroine or historic figure is worthy of the worship Christ deserves. He is incomparable in His mercy, incomparable in His compassion, incomparable in His humility and incomparable in His beauty. He is, quite simply, incomparably unique. Indeed, Christ embodies the word *unique*: “One and only; having no like or equal; unparalleled; existing only in one known example.” Christ alone is that “one known example.” He is unquestionably incomparable!

Return with me for just a moment to review the encounter when three of Christ’s apostles saw the Lord in His incomparable splendor on what theologians refer to as the Mount of Transfiguration:

²Webster’s *New World College Dictionary*, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “incomparable.”

³Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in R. W. Mills, *Truth—Not Exactly: A Book for Truth Seekers and Those They Care About* (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2004), 372.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain. His appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. His clothes shimmered, glistening white. . . . Just then a light-radiant cloud enveloped them, and from deep in the cloud, a voice: “This is my Son, marked by my love. Listen to him.” The next minute the disciples were looking around, rubbing their eyes, seeing nothing but Jesus, only Jesus.

Mark 9:2–3, 7–8 MSG

The apostle Paul would later see Christ in a similar dramatic encounter on the Damascus Road when his name was yet Saul. Until that moment, he was a feared persecutor of Christians. The *Passion Translation* describes that moment: “Just outside the city [Damascus], a brilliant light flashing from heaven suddenly exploded all around him. Falling to the ground, he heard a booming voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:3–4 TPT). So powerful was that moment that Saul was left blind for three days. Thus would begin one of the most remarkable conversions in the history of the Church. Saul had encountered the *Incomparable Christ*! He would soon become Paul, the chief apostle.

New Sights of Glory

Vital for every Christ-follower to recognize is that there are new sights of glory to be discovered in spending intimate time daily with the *Incomparable Jesus*! He is all. He is everything. He is enough! Like the three invitees accompanying Christ into a “light-radiant cloud” atop a Judean mountain where their Savior was transfigured, may we have those moments when we, too, rub our eyes and see “nothing but Jesus, only Jesus!”

Return a final time with me to Paul’s writings to the Ephesian Christians. In this letter, Paul speaks of how Christ has “raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6–7 ESV). Later in that same letter, Paul shares his personal testimony: “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8 ESV).

Two expressions leap from the text: *immeasurable riches* and *unsearchable riches*. *Immeasurable* means: “that which cannot be measured; boundless!”⁴ *Unsearchable* means: “that which cannot be searched; mysterious!”⁵ Together, those definitions, and all else

⁴Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “immeasurable.”

⁵Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 6th ed. (2018), s.v. “unsearchable.”

we have shared on every page of this book, spells, for us, a single name—*Jesus!* Starting tomorrow, let's spend another "Month in the Son"!

A Prayer for Today

Jesus, I thank You for the gift of this month, my personal "Month in the Son," as I've basked in the wonder of Your incomparable presence. Thank You for leading me through these 31 days, for encountering me in the midst of each of them, as I've explored new wonders of Yourself and Your heart to me. I pray, my incomparable Lord, that I might carry this habit of practicing Your presence forward into my everyday life. May I become increasingly aware of Your awesome greatness daily! I long to discover new wonders about You continually. Oh, how incomparable are Your great names! They are for me a continual feast for joyful worship and reflection. They remind me there is so much more of You to know. Keep me knowing. Keep me exploring. Reveal Yourself to me afresh each day. There is truly none like You! Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE INCOMPARABLE JESUS:

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Remember—these four steps, as explained more fully on page 11, are suggested to help you apply this quality of Christ to your own life.

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3. **EXPRESS:** During your quiet time, take a moment to journal your thoughts, even if briefly.
4. **EXALT:** Pray, praise or even spontaneously sing your way through today's list of the names of Jesus. It only requires a few minutes.

GLORIFY HIS NAME

Let them *praise* the *name* of the LORD for his *name* alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

PSALM 148:13 NIV, *emphasis added*

Unshakable God (Psalm 18:46 TPT)

Unspeakable Gift (2 Corinthians
9:15 KJV)

Upholding All Things (Hebrews
1:3 NKJV)

Vine, The (John 15:5 NKJV)

**Visible Image of the Invisible God,
The** (Colossians 1:15 NLT)

Warrior, A (Exodus 15:3 NLT)

Way, the Truth, and the Life, The
(John 14:6 NKJV)

White-Hot Fire (Malachi 3:2 MSG)

Wide River of Protection, A (Isaiah
33:21 NLT)

Witness to the People, A (Isaiah
55:4 NKJV)

Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah
9:6 NLT)

Word-Made-Flesh, The (John
12:48 MSG)

Word of God, The (Revelation
19:13 NKJV)

Word of Life, The (1 John 1:1
NLT, NKJV)

World's Light, The (John 8:12 MSG)

Your Bodyguard (Psalm 34:20 MSG)

Your Confidence (Proverbs
3:26 NKJV)

Your Everlasting Light (Isaiah
60:20 NLT)

Your Exceedingly Great Reward
(Genesis 15:1 NKJV)

Your Glorious Sword (Deuteronomy
33:29 NIV)

Your Guardian God (Psalm
121:3 MSG)

Your Holy One (Acts 2:27 NKJV)

Your Keeper (Psalm 121:5 NKJV)

Your Personal God (Isaiah
43:3 MSG)

Your Sacred One (Acts 2:27 TPT)

Your Security (Proverbs 3:26 NLT)

Your Shade (Psalm 121:5 NKJV)

Zion-Dwelling God (Psalm
9:11 MSG)