



**Explore and
Experience
the
Spectacular
Supremacy of
God's Son Today**

Introducing the 7 Groundbreaking Keys: **How to Explore and Experience the Spectacular Supremacy of God's Son Today**

One Chapter to Prepare You for the Next Seven



I want them to have complete confidence
 that they understand God's mysterious plan,
which is Christ himself.

In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
 (Colossians 2, NLT, emphasis added).

Christ the Redeemer — internationally recognized as a most remarkable
 marvel of the modern world.

I'm referring to the seven-hundred-ton *Christ the Redeemer* statue erected on
 top of Corcovado Mountain, looming imperially over Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
 Standing at its base, one can't help being amazed at this extraordinary
 sculptural achievement and awed by its overpowering image of Jesus.

You may feel the next seven chapters prove similarly overpowering as they
 lay out for you a wealth of towering truths concerning the vastness of Christ
 you may not have encountered before.

To be candid, while shaping this book I frequently found myself taken aback by what I was uncovering of the awesome marvels of the *real* Redeemer—the most phenomenal wonder the world has ever beheld — or ever will.

One term often used for this expansive focus on the Lord Jesus Christ is “Christology.” What does that involve?

In one sense, Christology could be pictured as the effort of Church scholars to “sculpt” a Trinitarian-grounded testimony to God the Son in order to amaze us with who he is and what he has accomplished.

To say it another way, Christology rises from a scriptural study of Christ in at least four directions: who he is as God’s Son; where he is headed in God’s purposes; how he is restoring God’s universe; and in what ways he exalts God’s glory.

Given a contemporary context, we might define Christology as the Bible’s perspective on the current reign of Christ, how right now it is impacting individual lives as well as nations and generations, and what this tells us about the person and passions and purposes of our Lord Jesus today.

This book, *Christ Is NOW!*, is all about “Christology.” It emerges from over a quarter century of concentrated research, as I focused exclusively on the inexhaustible, foundational biblical doctrine of who Jesus is.

As a result, for me Christology has come down to this: exploring and experiencing multiple dimensions of Christ’s spectacular supremacy by making use of seven major categories or “keys” that unlock a great many of the “treasures” hidden in him (Colossians 2).

Soon you too will become quite familiar with these seven keys as the following pages make a most riveting use of them to revolutionize *your* Christology too.

How I Landed on These Seven Groundbreaking Keys

In this chapter, therefore, my first goal is to share with you how my newly gleaned reformulation of my vision of Christ changed my life — because I'm convinced your accrual of the same fresh perspectives will transform in equal measure your *own* relationship with God's Son.

So, here's my story.

For three decades I gave myself to searching out priceless insights on the nature of Jesus' glories as *foreshadowed* and *foretold* in hundreds of Old Testament passages. In the New Testament I found that the revelations of Jesus foreshadowed and foretold in the Old Testament were not only *fulfilled* in him but also *filled full* of him. Without exaggeration, literally thousands of phrases and verses, as well as entire sections of Scripture, laid before me "*boundless riches*" revealed in the Son of God (Ephesians 3, NIV).

Simultaneously, my growing Bible-based view of the King connected with reams of additional insights taken from early church fathers, influential theologians across the centuries, renowned contemporary Christian thinkers, as well as recent volumes and videos inventoried by the Library of Congress.

To give you a taste of this feast, consider this small sampling of volumes whose very titles hint at how they enriched my understanding of (and my walk with) Jesus as Lord of all:



- **Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs/“Christology”** (David Bercot, Editor)
- **Christ in Song: Hymns of Immanuel From All Ages** (Philip Schaff, compiler)
- **Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study** (Gordon D. Fee)
- **The Glory of Christ** (John Owen)
- **The Glory of Christ** (R. C. Sproul)
- **The Incomparable Christ** (John Stott)
- **Jesus: Son and Savior** (John Paul II)
- **Who Is This King of Glory: Experiencing the Fullness of Christ's Work in Our Lives** (Tony Evans)
- **Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament** (Christopher J. H. Wright)
- **The Passion of the Lord: African American Reflections** (James Noel, Editor)
- **The Many Faces of Jesus Christ: Intercultural Christology** (Volker Kuster)
- **Christology: An Ecumenical, International and Contextual Perspective** (Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen)
- **Infinity Dwindles to Infancy: History of Catholic and Evangelical Christology** (Edward Oakes)
- **Altogether Lovely: The Glory and Excellency of Jesus Christ** (Jonathan Edwards)
- **Christ Among Other gods: A Defense of Christ in an Age of Tolerance** (Erwin W. Lutzer)
- **The Real Kosher Jesus** (Michael L. Brown)
- **ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church** (Michael Frost, Alan Hirsch)
- **Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God** (Tim Keller)
- **Jesus Ascended: The Meaning of Christ's Continuing Incarnation** (Gerrit Scott Dawson)
- **Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ** (John Piper)
- **The Jesus I Never Knew** (Philip Yancey)
- **Christ: The Spiritual Sum of All Things** (Watchman Nee)
- **The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited** (Scot McKnight)
- **Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters** (N. T. Wright)
- **Jesus Mean and Wild: The Unexpected Love of an Untamable God** (Mark Galli)

That's just for starters.

Each treatise (and hundreds more like them) highlighted astounding, life-changing gems about our Savior that far too many faithful followers have overlooked — as I once did — to our great loss.

In addition to all this reading, in the early 1980s I started *listening* a whole lot more when I joined Christian gatherings across the globe in all kinds of settings. What I heard supplemented my research with equally invaluable truths gained simply by paying closer attention to God's people (especially their leaders) as they shared how to think about God's Son based on their own life experiences and traditions.

In more ways than one, growing my Christology also required very *personal* endeavors. Through intimate seasons of heartwarming yet soul-humbling encounters with Jesus, orchestrated by the Holy Spirit, my vision of God's Son was greatly expanded and deepened. During private retreats and in times with fellow believers, through the Word and worship, I forged an unforgettable communion with my Lord that made my Christology grow into something profoundly alive to me and life-giving for others.

You Are the Main Reason I Wrote *Christ Is NOW!*

Throughout this entire process, however, one central concern would not let me go.

Must *all* believers, I wondered, invest years in exhaustive studies on all these various levels if they're to have any hope of finding for themselves a wider, stronger, more enriching, more intimate grasp of who Jesus is today? Does every disciple need to spend countless hours researching biblical passages and scholarly works on Christology to make sense of the magnitude of our Master?

Or instead, might it be possible for me to *distill* and *simplify* the thousands of individual insights acquired by the approaches outlined above in order to gift fellow Christians with an effective approach to unlocking the wonders of Jesus for themselves — a strategy that is less complicated and confusing, more orderly and accessible? If so, how?

Might there be a way to create a resource that helps God's people catch and keep such a wide-ranging vision of Christ's glory that it compels them to embrace and apply the blessings of Christ's spectacular supremacy to everyday life?

Finally, I was able to formulate a plan to do just that.

In the early 1990s I started cataloging my findings on thousands of 3 x 5 index cards. Each contained a specific truth or insight or Scripture or quotation regarding what makes Jesus on the throne so special. Within a few years, the tally packed out more than a dozen shoeboxes!

Next I tried organizing this trove under major headings. After much trial and error, and following extensive field-testing with all kinds of audiences, I landed on an easy-to-recall template to effectively funnel this massive survey of Christ into a manageable, workable, replicable way of describing a host of incomparable qualities found in who Jesus is today as "Ruler of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1).

I concluded that everything I had uncovered about the glory of Jesus could be summed up in just seven overarching categories. These facets of Christ's supremacy comprise what might be described as the "seven wonders" of God's Son — wonders that reveal who he *was* and who he *will be*, but most importantly, who he *is* at this very moment.

This became my personal "take" on Christology. And what a "take" it has proven to be!

Over the years I've watched these seven fundamental outlooks encourage thousands of Christians to encounter Jesus *as if* (as I often put it) "they were meeting him again for the first time." I don't know another way to say it!

At the same time, I was encouraged to watch how many of these awakened believers started talking a whole lot more with one another about what they were discovering about their Savior. This renewed vision of Christ was spreading!

On top of that, these seven dimensions have furnished Christian leaders with effective teaching tools with which to teach their people about the "whole Christ" and to lead their people to offer themselves more fully to the lordship of Christ, moving them into a God-given awakening to the fullness of Christ.

And now, with this book — especially through what is laid out in the next seven chapters — I get to share many of these rich discoveries with you also! I can hardly wait!

Therefore, I suggest:

**Consider this book to be a major *re-introduction* to God's Son,
designed to ignite in every reader
a new level of decisive devotion toward him.**

You Can Be Sure These Keys Are Thoroughly Sufficient

Throughout the years of research I kept crisscrossing the Body of Christ to pass along my new findings, interacting with a variety of audiences. This included open forums with diverse groups during presentations of *The Christ Institutes (TCI)* — a live, 48-hour interactive seminar built around the same seven-fold vision. Responses from the attendees of this multimedia outreach provided me added substantive feedback that sharpened my thinking even more. (Today, *TCI* has evolved into *The Christ Institutes Video Series*, available at www.ChristNow.com for free download).

Everywhere I went — including gatherings replete with theological academicians—I openly invited participants to make me aware of any vital characteristics of the person of Christ not captured by one or more of these seven categories.

I have reassuring news to report! To date, no one — *not one individual* — has approached me to suggest these seven dimensions are inadequate for allowing believers to take deep dives into the fullness of God's Son!

Therefore, even though the marvelous realities of the second person of the Trinity remain unfathomable and unsearchable, just as his love for us “surpasses knowledge” (Ephesians 3, NIV), still let me say again:

**Consider this book to be a major *re-introduction* to God's Son,
designed to ignite in every reader
a new level of decisive devotion toward him.**

Here Are the 7 Keys, Ready for Your Immediate Use



As a result of my pursuits, I now offer you this most intriguing means for acquiring superb vistas on the wonders of Jesus — insights as robust today as they will be ten thousand years from now. After all, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and *today* and forever” (Hebrews 13, emphasis added). Therefore, each key unlocks more of who Jesus is *right now!*

This seven-fold Christology, when applied by the power of the Spirit, can equip any believer to enter into a life purpose and life direction and lifestyle that are *Christ-driven* as never before — which is why I sometimes refer to it as a “*consequential* Christology.”

Perhaps surprisingly, this approach to such a crucial and inexhaustible topic is based on seven very simple, ordinary words — tiny prepositions spoken repeatedly in everyday conversations by all of us ever since we were little children.

To be sure, ten million times ten million words could never begin to describe the innumerable glories of our mighty Savior. However, these seven prepositions give Christians a new template to start exploring and experiencing in new ways the *essentials* of who the Lord Jesus is in the majesty of his supremacy.

These are the seven prepositions: Who Christ is **TO** us, **FOR** us, **OVER** us, **BEFORE** us, **WITHIN** us, **THROUGH** us, and **UPON** us.

Think of them as seven sacred keys shaped to open seven sacred doors through which anyone may enter to see, seek, savor, and then share with others more of the truth that *is* Christ.

Let me risk a bold assertion: There is nothing to know about who our Lord Jesus is today beyond what stretches before us on the other side of these seven portals as we work with each of the seven categories. I assert that to explore and experience a fuller measure of who Christ is we need only to discover more of:

who Christ is TO us today

as we take stock of his

divinity, character, names, destiny, supremacy

who Christ is FOR us today

as we investigate his

incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension — combined

who Christ is OVER us today

as we unpack his

reign over creation, history, rulers, nations, powers, the Church

who Christ is BEFORE us today

as we follow him

into the future, into the heavens, into the promises, into the world

who Christ is WITHIN us today

as we welcome him

to inhabit his people and rule among us in his fullness

who Christ is THROUGH us today

as we invite him

to open up opportunities to use us in advancing his global cause

who Christ is UPON us today

as we celebrate

his victories promised at the consummation of all things as well as approximations of that consummation he provides us today

Please, never let the simplicity of this basic outline deceive you. Learning to know Jesus so much better really can be this *profoundly simple*.

Yet at the same time, never be casual about it. Everything you learn about him over the next seven chapters will always be *simply profound!*

Behold then! — the seven-fold exaltation of God’s dear Son, designed to foster in you and me fresh fervency for his name.

Behold then! — the seven core characteristics of our King for believers like you and me to ponder and praise and propagate widely.

Behold, then! — the seven-part message about the magnificence of who Christ is today, for the Church to *reclaim* and then *proclaim* to our generation.

A Prayer for the Adventure Ahead



Exploring and experiencing more of the glories of Christ Jesus — it’s an adventure unlike any you’ve taken before!

Over and over in the coming pages you’ll be challenged to reevaluate how you view and value your relationship to God’s Son. Refuse to turn back. Keep pressing on. With the turn of every page embrace the thrill of growing to know our Savior more fully than ever!

With such prospects in view we close this chapter with a prayer about what’s ahead, adapted from the one that closes Ephesians 1. **Pray with me now:**

Father, our destiny rests exclusively in your dear Son and all he is.

So, because you are the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask you to grant us through the Holy Spirit a greater measure of supernatural revelation so that we may know your Son more clearly, more thoroughly, and more intimately.

Father, as we *explore* Christ in these next seven chapters, open the eyes of our hearts to a much larger view of him.

Especially, give us fresh insight into Jesus' incomparably mighty power that is at work in all who trust in him — that very same power that you exerted when you raised your Son from the dead and seated him at your right hand in the heavenly realms. Dazzle us with how and why his reign today is far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

O dear Father, as a result of these studies we also want to *experience* Christ more deeply.

In the most personal sense, may we encounter more of his greatness and goodness and glory — as you fill us with more of the life of the One who at this very moment is filling the entire universe with his presence, his passion, his kingdom activity, and his saving power.

AMEN!

Recommendation to the reader: Take a minute to read back through the section titled "You Absolutely Must Read This First!" found at the opening of this book. Note its practical suggestions on how to get the most out of the unusual layout, creative graphics, and application sections that shape the next seven chapters.

