

Title: The Greatest Quest**[Slide 1]****Text: Colossians 3:1-4****Primary Focus****JWST:**

The world is about to get another telescope: The James Webb Space Telescope. So what will this new telescope be like? Think: Hubble Space Telescope on steroids!

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- 18 mirror segments will work together to create a 6.5 meter reflector. Compare this to Hubble's 2.4 meter mirror.
- As a result, the Webb telescope will collect 6X more light than Hubble.
- The Webb telescope will give us a window back in time to the beginnings of the Universe, and a glimpse as well of other planets that may have conditions suitable for life.
- Its journey to space is scheduled for some time between March and June, 2019.

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To do its job, it will need to be in the right place – orbiting around the Sun 1,000,000 miles from Earth. It will need to be in constant contact with astronomers here at home. And every one of its 18 mirrors will need to work together to create a perfectly focused image.

If all goes well, the Webb telescope will give us a glimpse of the heavens unlike anything we have ever seen.

Primary Focus:

The same is true for you and me. We were made to see into Heaven itself! The Webb telescope may give us an unprecedented glimpse of the creation of the Universe. But you and I were created to give a glimpse of the Creator Himself! We are God's telescopes.

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae:

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Colossians 3:1-2 NIV

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

God has uniquely equipped us to see not only the physical world around us, but the spiritual dimension as well. We are now equipped to see and understand “things above.” And we have a special mission: to aim the telescope of our hearts and minds on Heaven and its King.

Raised with Christ:

The key thing that makes the difference for us is found in the fact that we “have been raised with Christ.”

The Webb telescope is designed to capture not just visible light, but infrared light – “heat” if you will – from distant stars and galaxies. The earth’s atmosphere filters out much of this light. What’s more, the earth’s own heat would overwhelm the telescope’s delicate sensors. To solve that problem, the telescope will reside a million miles from earth and its warmth, chilled by the unfathomable cold of outer space.

Our ability to see and reflect God is degraded by the atmosphere of sin and death that enshrouds this world. As Paul puts it:

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2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

But Paul says that through Jesus’ victory over sin and death, we can now at last see Him clearly:

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2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

This happens when we put our faith in Jesus, letting His death to sin become our death to sin, and His new resurrection life become our new life. Christ's story becomes *our story*. He fills the mirror of our telescope. Nothing and no one else.

A Hidden Life

Dead to this world:

Once the Webb telescope is launched, no human eyes will ever see it again. IT will sit out there a million miles away, too far for astronauts to visit. It will in many ways be "dead to this world" and alive to a brand new one. Only in this way can it fulfill its special mission to give us an unprecedented view of the Universe.

Paul says that we, too, are dead to the old life that we once knew:

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Colossians 3:3 NIV

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

You died. How? You died *when Jesus died on the cross*. His death to the sin and evil of the world was your death to sin and evil as well. Paul wrote to the Galatians:

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Galatians 2:20 NIV

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

A Hidden Life:

This new life is a "hidden life." It is a life "now hidden with Christ in God." Like the mysteries of the Universe that await discovery by the Webb

telescope, your new life in Christ is waiting to be discovered. The “new you” is hidden for now, hidden in the very Person of Jesus Christ Himself.

Everything you’re looking for, everything you need to become the person God meant for you to be, is hidden in Christ. Paul says that his goal for his readers is:

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Colossians 2:2b-3 NIV

...that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Find Christ and you find the hidden treasure! Find Christ and you find *you*.

The Greatest Quest

Already, not yet:

The most a telescope can ever do is give us a glimpse of what is or has been. The Webb telescope will astound us with its images of the Universe *as it was 13 billion years ago*.

But Paul tells us that when we become God’s telescopes, we catch a glimpse of not only what has been, but what *will be!*

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Colossians 3:4 NIV

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Think of it: when we see Jesus, we see not only God’s victory over sin and death. We see the coming King who will rule a restored Creation. His victory over sin in our lives is *part of the great remaking of our world: God’s New Creation*.

“Our Life”

And did you catch the little phrase: “Christ, who is your life”? Your new life is not just hidden with Christ in God. Christ Himself *is your life*. You no longer

have, need, or should ever want your old life. It's dead. Good riddance. Now, Jesus the King is your Life!

This hidden Life is not a quest for the "real me," "my authentic self," etc. It is Christ Himself. Life isn't a *thing*. *It's a Person*.

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John writes:

1 John 1:1-2 NIV

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

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The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

Jesus said:

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John 14:6 NIV

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Life is a Person. Life is Jesus. Find Him and you find Life.

The Greatest Quest:

And that means that finding Jesus each and every day is our Greatest Quest. It was what we were made for. It is what God has equipped us to do by raising us from spiritual death to resurrection life. It is what this lost world most needs: a glimpse of Heaven in the face of Christ.

I invite you to set out on this quest in a special way over the next 6 weeks. We will be meeting each week here at the church to learn *how* to find that Hidden Life that is Christ. Laura Chevalier will be teaching and equipping us to develop the spiritual disciplines that will help us focus on Jesus. Sunday's

sermons will highlight ways in which Jesus and His disciples found and kept their focus on "the things above."

You were put here on this earth to give a dark world a glimpse of Heaven's King. This is your Greatest Quest. Fulfill that quest and you will bring Heaven to earth.