

The Person & Work of Christ!

Colossians 1:15-23

Last week we looked at the Personal section of Colossians. Today we begin the second section, The Doctrinal section which we will be on for the next 3 weeks.

The Doctrinal section is found in Colossians 1:15-2:23.

Today we look at the first topic Paul addresses, which is:

The Person & Work of Christ! 1:15-23

I. The Pre-eminence of Jesus Christ 1:15-19

This passage is one of the most significant teaching about Jesus which reveals His true identity.

The Bible itself is the story of Jesus. The Old Testament is the preparation of the coming of Christ. The Gospels are the story of Jesus in human flesh. Acts is the spread of the message of Jesus. The Epistles are the theology of Jesus' work and

personification of Christ in His body, the church. And Revelation is about Christ on the throne!

Paul is going to address 5 heresies that were infecting the church in Colossae. These heresies are:

1. Denial of Christ's humanity.
2. Worship of angels.
3. Ceremonialism.
4. Claim that secret knowledge was required for salvation.
5. Rejection of Christ's deity.

Paul does this be revealing Jesus' true identity!

A. Jesus in relation to God.

Colossians 1:15, "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

Jesus is the image of God, man was also created in God's image but only Jesus is the perfect image. Where man is fallen and humanity doesn't carry many of God's characteristics like His omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence...Jesus does!

When it says that Jesus is the 'first born' it doesn't mean first created. We know that Jesus is the "only begotten son." We also know this from the context of

this passage as in verse 17 Paul tells us Jesus is “before all things.”

Jesus is the very first thing. He is the alpha and omega, the first and last.

B. Jesus in relation to the universe.

Colossians 1:16-17, “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Paul gives us 3 reasons why Jesus has supremacy over creation in this passage:

1. He is the Creator.

Scientists speak of the Anthropic Principle, “which states that the universe appears to be carefully designed for the well-being of mankind.”

In Genesis when God created, He said after each day that what He had done was good. Jesus did this!

2. He is before all things.

John 8:58, “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

The Jewish people who heard what Jesus said here knew exactly what He was saying. Jesus was claiming to be The I Am, Yahweh!

3. In Him all things hold together.

Scientists refer to the force holding atoms together as a secret held by nature itself.

Jesus even created all thrones and powers and rulers and authorities. This includes the angels. The angels in heaven worship Jesus and whenever a prophet saw an angel and bowed to worship it the angel admonished them to only worship God.

C. Jesus in relation to the church.

Colossians 1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”

Paul presents 4 great truths about Christ and the church here:

1. Christ is head of the church.

2. Christ is the source of the church.
3. Christ is the 1st born from the dead.
4. Christ is the pre-eminent one.

I like that 1st born from the dead part. WE WERE DEAD and because Jesus rose, we have also been raised from the dead into life eternal!

When God created man, He said it wasn't good for man to be alone, so He created woman for man. Now, listen to this, God has a son. What does a father want for His son?

A wife, so He prepared a wife for His son, the church. Do we understand the implications of this?

D. Paul's wrap up.

Colossians 1:19, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,"

Jesus has the fullness of God in Him! This makes Him God!

You don't need angels or anything else to be saved, all you need is Jesus!

II. Reconciled to God 1:20-23

There are five words in the New Testament that describe the richness of salvation. They are Justification, redemption, forgiveness, adoption and reconciliation. Each of these describe our standing before God in some fashion and the transformation that salvation brings to each of these descriptors.

In reconciliation we stand before God as an enemy, but through reconciliation we become His friend. CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS? WE BECOME A FRIEND OF GOD!

2 Corinthians 5:18-21, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Reconciliation simply means we 'exchange' something and in this case we exchange being an enemy of God for becoming His friend.

Jesus is the only one, the only means, to be reconciled to a Holy God! Only Jesus!

A. The plan of reconciliation

Colossians 1:20-21, “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.”

This is God’s plan. Through Jesus we are reconciled to God, but God’s plan is bigger. When Adam sinned all of creation suffered the consequences of the fall. But through Jesus all things will be reconciled. We see in Revelation 21 that ultimately God creates a new heaven and new earth free from the consequences of sin.

“all things” here does not include the fallen angels and those who reject Jesus as Savior.

B. The means of reconciliation

Colossians 1:20b, 22a, “by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” “But now he has

reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death”

The critical part of salvation is the sacrificial death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf.

Romans 5:9-10, “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

C. The aim of reconciliation

Colossians 1:22b, “to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation”

Paul shows us the 3 goals of reconciliation.

Reconciliation makes us holy, blameless and beyond reproach.

THIS IS HOW GOD SEE US! Not as enemies, not as sinners, not filthy, not without value. When we have Jesus as Savior, we become part of the bride God has chosen for His son. Do we understand this?

D. The evidence of reconciliation.

Colossians 1:23, “if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.”

The proof that you have been reconciled to God is simple. You will continue in faith. You will stand firm; you will be steadfast. You won’t flop around like a wave on the sea. No, you will be rooted in The Word of God. I might add, you will bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Nothing will move you away from the hope you have in the good news of Jesus.

How do we apply this to our daily life? Ask yourself, do you see the fruit of the Spirit growing in your life?

Galatians 5:22-23a, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.”

What we don’t see here is:

1. You must have your own way.
2. Anger

3. Discontent
4. Seeking personal preference
5. Impatience
6. Being bossy

Galatians 5:19b-21a, “sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.”

When you examine yourself and the traits you find aren’t on the fruit of the Spirit list, you have some work to do.