

Col 1:13 - 18

The Preeminence of Christ – His Divine Person

At the end of Paul's prayer he talked about the Father redeeming us. Paul uses this opportunity to now show that God's Son, in whom we have redemption, is a Divine Redeemer and therefore supreme in every way.

Paul is combating a heresy that taught Jesus was not supreme enough to completely save and sanctify them. They were looking for other means in addition to Christ for this. Without addressing the specific contents of this error, he first lays forth a very powerful positive statement of the truth. The best way to identify a lie is to study the truth.

- The truth the Colossians needed to grasp was that Christ is supreme and therefore able to completely save and sanctify them.
- In this particular section, Paul shows the unique majesty, supreme dignity and deity of Christ by *his relation to God, to the created universe, and to the church.*

His relation to God

- He is God's Son
 - 1:3 – calls God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - 1:13 – calls Jesus Christ God's beloved Son
 - Not that he is the offspring of the Father
 - It defines the relationship that exists between the first and the second person of the Trinity
 - WCF 2.3 – “the Son is eternally begotten of the Father”
 - Heb 1:5 – The 1st Person addresses the 2nd Person of Trinity (who already exists) and says You are my Son.
 - He has eternally been the Son of the Father -> eternally been divine
- He is the image of the invisible God
 - “Image” in this context means likeness or representation of, but also a manifestation of (revelation).
 - 2 Cor 4:4 – “Christ, who is the image of God”
 - 2 Cor 4:6 – “God...has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”
 - Heb 1:1-3 – The Son is the complete and final revelation of God to men.
 - John 14:9 – “He who has seen Me has seen the Father”
 - John 1:18 – “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten **God** who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him”
 - Luke 10:22 – “No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”
 - Even when we are in heaven, we will know God through Jesus.
 - The One on the throne will be Jesus Christ.

His relation to the created universe

- He is the firstborn of all creation
 - Not that he was created, for rest of the paragraph states that He was not created but himself was the Creator.
 - “Firstborn” - his supreme place or position.
 - He held the rank that is commonly assigned to the firstborn male.
 - In other words, creation was his inheritance. And therefore He is its Lord.

- All things were created by (or in) Him, through Him, for Him
 - He is stated here clearly as the Creator.
 - Specifically - He is the Source (by Him), the Agent (through Him), and the Goal of all creation (for Him).
 - John 1:3 – “All things came into being through Him (Agent), and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being (Source).”
 - Heb 1:2 – “in these last days God has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things (Goal), through whom also He made the world (Agent).”
 - “All things” is expanded on – “things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities”
 - Christ is not just supreme over all physical material creation but also over all spiritual realms and beings.
 - Thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities
 - Probably mentioned here because of the false teaching about the need to go through angels
 - Christ is superior to all spirits that men may be tempted to revere → they are all infinitely inferior to Christ
 - Heb 1:5-8 – None of the angels are like God’s Son. They are to worship Christ. So by implication we are also to worship Him and no one else. And we do not need to worship anyone else.

- He is before all things
 - Christ existed before all things – i.e. not created, eternal
 - John 21:7 – “Before Abraham was, I am”
 - Rev 1:8 - “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
 - He IS before all things – again emphasizing his prominence

- He holds all things created together (or “in Him all things endure”)
 - He is not only the Creator of the universe (both physical and spiritual) but also its Sustainer
 - Providence – He maintains its harmony, order and life
 - Science – “nuclear glue”

His relation to the church

Paul shows specifically one important area in which Christ is supreme in the spiritual realm

- Head of the body, the church
 - Corinthians, Ephesians – emphasis on the Church as the body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head.
 - Functions and relationships we have to one another as being part of Christ's body.
 - Colossians – emphasis is on Christ being head of the body, the church
 - The supreme position of Christ is the point Paul wants to get across
 - Organic Head
 - Much like our bodies can not live nor grow without the brain.
 - Christ causes his church to live and grow
 - Ruling Head
 - The control center for the human body and all of its functions is the brain. It also leads us to take action to protect our bodies from harm or danger
 - Christ exercises authority over the church, and all things for the sake of the church
 - Eph 1:22 – “He (God) put all things in subjection under His (Christ) feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.”
- Head of a family – the family of the resurrection (“firstborn”)
 - The Beginning – the first in line of those who rise from the dead... the source of all others
 - The Firstborn from the dead – others will follow
 - The Family of the resurrection
 - Union with Christ in his resurrection is an important theme in the letter
2:12-13 3:1

Summary

He has the pre-eminence in all things

- In the all spheres of creation – both material and spiritual
- Over the church and over all things for the sake of the church
- Nothing lies outside of his dominion

Col 1: 19-23

The Preeminence of Christ – His Reconciling Work

By this Divine Redeemer

All the fullness dwells in Him

- Divine Redeemer – in the previous verses Paul outlines the evidences that Christ is divine – now he states this fact directly

- “Fullness” – All that God is dwells in the person of Jesus Christ
- The Father’s good pleasure
 - It was the Father’s design that all the fullness of deity should dwell in Jesus Christ, not in any other being – i.e. angels – because it was his pleasure to use his Son, not anyone else to reconcile all things to Himself.

The Father reconciles all things to Himself

The scope of reconciliation – to reconcile ALL things to Himself through his Son the Divine Redeemer

- The whole created universe – things on earth and things in heaven
- Rom 8:19-22 - The creation moans...waiting for its redemption
- Sin has subjected everything to disorder, problems, misery
- The most important thing in all of creation to be reconciled to God is man – that’s why it took the a man to accomplish reconciliation

The means of reconciliation – the death of His Son, the God-man Christ Jesus, the Divine Redeemer

- Through the blood of the cross – 1:20
- In His fleshly body through death – 1:22
- Jesus was a real man just as much as he was divine
- Only a God-man’s death and shed blood could do everything necessary to completely reconcile sinful man to a holy God

The purpose of reconciliation – the holiness of believers

- The Colossians were included in this plan of reconciliation – 1:21-22
- 1:21 - What they used to be like – alienated, hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds
- 1:22 - What God is making them into – holy, blameless, beyond reproach

The human condition of reconciliation – faith in the gospel

- Firmly established and steadfast faith – persevere unto the end in our faith
- The Colossians’ situation - being threatened with heresy that would lead them away from complete faith in Christ & being threatened with temptations of immorality all around them
- They needed to continue in the hope of eternal life that was promised to them in the gospel that they first heard & believed

Encouragement to continue firmly in the faith of the gospel

The faith = the gospel = the hope of eternal life found in Christ

- Because it is the truth that they heard which changed their lives (1:5-6) – not something else like what the false teachings were peddling
 - Before they go and buy into to some new teaching, they need to stop and think about it – they got to where they are by the gospel of Christ.
- Because the gospel is not a local cult – it has been preached and accepted everywhere – in all creation under heaven
- Because the gospel has apostolic authority – the gospel Epaphras brought to them, he first learned from the Apostle Paul himself

- Who are these people that are bringing you a new teaching and what is their authority?