

Colossians – The Supremacy of Christ

[2] The Supremacy and Work of Christ (1:14-23)

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1. Reading: **Colossians 1:14-18**
2. Continue our study of Colossians, as we mentioned in the introduction, this is the most Christ-centered book of NT
3. **1:14-23** describe the supremacy and preeminence of Christ in His work, nature, and office
4. That in ALL things HE may have the preeminence (**Col. 1:18c**)

Discussion:

I. IN CHRIST WE HAVE REDEMPTION (**COL. 1:14**)

- A. Redemption = the forgiveness of sins (:14; **c.f. Eph. 1:7**)
- B. The ransom has been paid in full by His blood (something was required to atone for our sins if we are to be in God's presence)
 1. We were bought (back) with a price (**1 Cor. 6:20**)
 2. **1 Pt. 1:18-19** – price = precious blood of Christ
- C. "We sold ourselves into condemnation by sin, God bought us back with Christ's blood. Jesus gave His life that we might live with God"

II. CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD (**COL. 1:15A**)

- A. Image = likeness, figure, representation (**2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:1-4**)
- B. Of the invisible God
 1. No man has seen the father
 2. **Ex. 33:18-23; Jn. 1:18; 6:15-16**
- C. Affirms the preeminence and deity of Christ which was denied by the Gnostics in Colosse and by many still today
 1. Gnostics believed Jesus was just one of many intermediaries between God and men and was inferior to God. If Christ was divine, they said he could not have taken on flesh, so they reasoned that He was not divine. Not contact between matter and spirit.
 2. Paul clearly affirms here, and elsewhere, that Christ indeed is deity, God, AND was in the flesh.

III. CHRIST IS THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION (**COL. 1:15B-17**)

- A. Firstborn = position of authority, power, honor (**Ps. 89:27; Heb. 1:1-2; Rom. 8:29**)
 1. Again, Paul drives this point concerning the preexistence and authority of Christ home because of the philosophies being injected into the Colossians by those around them.
 2. Christ is above everything, even the spiritual realms of which are invisible to man. Christ created all of them and has the rule over all!
- B. Firstborn because:
 1. (**Col.1:16**) By, Through, and For Him, all things were created (**Jn. 1:1-3, 10; Heb. 1:2; Phil. 2:6-7**) – physical and spiritual things (**Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 2 Cor. 4:18**)
 2. (**Col.1:17a**) Before All Things (**Jn. 8:58; Micah 5:2; Heb. 1:8-12**)
 3. (**Col. 1:17b**) In Him All things Consist (**Heb. 1:3**)

IV. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH (COL. 1:18A)

- A. Head = rule, authority, power
- B. Body = the church;
 - 1. one head = one body (Eph. 4:4)
 - obviously true because it is stated in scripture, but it makes rational or logical sense as well – a body with many heads would be a monstrosity, as would a head with many bodies
 - since there is but one Christ, there can be only one body, church recognized by the Lord
 - 2. The body (church) belongs to Christ (Mt. 16:18)
- C. Christ, alone, is the one who has authority over the church (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23-24)

V. CHRIST IS THE BEGINNING, FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD (COL. 1:18B)

- A. Beginning (*arche*) – commencement, chief, power, principality, rule
- B. Firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29)
- C. Firstborn from the dead – not the first to simply raise from the dead (Shunamite woman's son, Man who touched Elisha's bones, Lazarus, etc.)
- D. First to rise never to die again. A precursor to our resurrection (Rom. 6:5-9; 1 Cor. 15:20-28)

VI. WHAT GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE DECIDED CONCERNING CHRIST (COL. 1:19-23)

- A. In Him all the fullness would dwell (Col. 1:19) – of the Godhead (Col. 2:9-10; equal with God – Phil. 2:6)
- B. He would reconcile all things (Col. 1:20-23)
 - 1. (Col. 1:20) In heaven and earth, no reconciliation apart from Christ – Phil. 2:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-19
 - 2. (Col. 1:21) Alienation = need for reconciliation (Eph. 2:13-17)
 - 3. By His blood (Col. 1:20c) and his death (Col. 1:22a)
- C. Goal of reconciliation: to present men holy, blameless, and above reproach (Col. 1:22b)
 - 1. Conditional: IF (Col. 1:23)
 - a. Continue in the faith (Heb. 4:14)
 - b. Grounded and steadfast (1 Cor. 15:58)
 - c. Not moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:5; Heb. 3:12-14; 4:1-2, 10; 10:35-39)
 - i. Preached to every creature under heaven (Col. 1:6)
 - ii. Of which Paul became a minister (Next Lesson)

Conclusion:

- 1. The Supremacy and work of Christ
 - 1. In Christ we have redemption (:14)
 - 2. Christ is the image of God (:15a)
 - 3. Christ is the firstborn over all creation (:15b-17)
 - 4. Christ is the head of the body, the church (:18a)
 - 5. Christ is the beginning, firstborn from dead (:18b)
 - 6. God's good pleasure decided : all the fullness would dwell in Christ (:19); reconciliation (:20-23)
- 2. Have we met the conditions to receive the blessings found in Christ?
- 3. If not, why not come to Him today?
- 4. God gave His Son, Christ gave His life, that WE might live with Him!