

Who Is Jesus?

Colossians 1:15-23

Background

Of Prophecies of Jesus.

Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 22:18; etc.

- ▶ Prophecies of His birth ... fulfillment.
- ▶ Prophecies of His character ... fulfillment.
- ▶ Prophecies of His ministry ... fulfillment
- ▶ Prophecies of His betrayal, trial, and crucifixion ... fulfillment.
- ▶ Prophecies of His resurrection and exaltation ... fulfillment.

Background Of The Colossians

- ▶ **Gnosticism** ... The intellectual ones.
 - These men were not satisfied with the simplicity of New Testament Christianity and thus attempted to turn Christianity into a philosophy and make it common with other philosophies of the time; that salvation was not for every man, but only for the intellectual.
 - Paul said salvation is redemption ... forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14), and that it is available to every man "*in Christ.*" (Colossians 1:28)

Paul's Declaration Of Christ's Preeminence

- ▶ It was Paul's aim against this background to present a beautiful picture of salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - "that in all things He might have the preeminence."***
- ▶ This is shown in all of His relationships. Colossians 1:15-23

"Preeminence" defined

- ▶ "To be first" (*protos*), "to be preeminent," is used of Christ in relation to the Church, Colossians 1:18 (*Vine*)
- ▶ "To be first (in rank or influence): - have the preeminence" (*Strong*)
- ▶ "To be first, hold the first place, Colossians 1:18." (*Thayer*)

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To God.

Colossians 1:15

- ▶ **He is "the image of the invisible God"**
- ▶ He represents the Father perfectly to us, "*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*" (John 14:6-11; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- ▶ "**Image**" also conveys the idea of *manifestation*. (John 1:1, 14, 18; cf. 1 Timothy 3:16)
 - Paul was telling these Colossians that even though they had not and could not see God, they could know him by looking at Jesus.

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To God. Colossians 1:15

- ▶ Jesus is the *"fulness" of God.* (Colossians 1:19; 2:8-9)
- ▶ Fulness means He is the whole, of God ... all the attributes of deity dwell in Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Christ is not simply a sketch of God; "He is not merely a summary of what God is; He is more than a lifeless portrait of God. In Him there is nothing left out; He is the full and final revelation of God and nothing more is necessary." (cf. John 14:8-9)
- ▶ cf. The Gnostic view was that Jesus was only an emanation from God.

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To God. Colossians 1:15-17

- ▶ Jesus is *"The firstborn of all creation."*
- ▶ *prōtotokos* "pertaining to existing prior to something else - 'existing first, existing before ... existing before all creation' or 'existing before anything was created' Col 1:15. It is possible to understand firstborn as 'superior in status'". (*Greek-English Lexicon Semantic Domain.*)
- ▶ *"Firstborn"* is a title of honor of the Messiah (Psalms 89:27).
 - He is to have the preeminence because He is greater than any created being.

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To The Creation. Colossians 1:16

- ▶ All things were created *"by Him."*
- ▶ From Genesis 1:26-27 we learn that someone was present with the Father at the creation.
- ▶ John 1:1-3 indicates that Jesus was there and was working in the creation. cf. Hebrews 1:2-3

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To The Creation. Colossians 1:16

- ▶ All things were created *"for Him."* Colossians 1:16 (*To be His.*)
- ▶ That is to say, creation was created to be His and to give Him glory. Those who believe in naturalism, see no real purpose in the creation.
- ▶ Instead of Christ being a created angel, He is the creator of all angelic beings. (cf. Hebrews 1) cf. Worship of angels. (Colossians 2:18)

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To The Creation. Colossians 1:16

- ▶ In Him in *"all things consist"* (hold together). (Colossians 1:17)
- ▶ He is Lord of the universe and is *"upholding all things by the word of his power"* (Hebrews 1:3)
- ▶ The natural laws that cause the universe to operate are given and maintained by Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Therefore the so-called natural laws are divine laws.

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To The Church. (Colossians 1:18-19)

- ▶ He is the head of the body. (Colossians 1:18)
- ▶ The church is described as the body in several NT passages. (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-24; 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12)
- ▶ There is only one body (Ephesians 4:4), thus only one church.
- ▶ In the human body, the head guides the body and without the head the body is powerless to act.
- ▶ Every word and action of the church must be governed and directed by Jesus Christ. (cf. Matthew 21:23-27; cf. Colossians 3:17)

Christ's Preeminence

**Shown In His Relationship To The Church.
(Colossians 1:18-19)**

- ▶ **He is the beginning of the church.
(Matthew 16:18)**
- ▶ We must not bring its lofty mission down to serve the outward man, but rather we must keep it pure to serve Him who died for it.

Christ's Preeminence

**Shown In His Relationship To The Church.
(Colossians 1:18-19)**

- ▶ **He is the "firstborn from the dead."**
- ▶ Jesus was not the first to be raised from the dead.
 - The prophet Elijah prays and God raises a young boy from death (1 Kings 17:17-24)
 - Elisha raises the son of the woman of Shunem (2 Kings 4:32-37) whose birth he previously foretold (2 Kings 4:8-16)
 - Widow of Nain, son. Luke 7:11
 - Lazarus. John 11:41-44
- ▶ **Yet, He is alive for evermore. Revelation 1:18**

Christ's Preeminence

**Shown In His Relationship To The Church.
(Colossians 1:18-19)**

- ▶ **The climax is that "in *all things* he might have the preeminence." i.e. "be first, have first place."**
- ▶ The final triumph of His resurrection has given Him every right to be Lord of all. (cf. Genesis 3:15; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 2:22-36)
- ▶ Jesus is worthy of the highest place of honor that either heaven or earth can provide.

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To Sin And The Sinner. (Colossians 1:20-23)

- ▶ **The object of His coming was to bring reconciliation.**
- ▶ Sin causes enmity or separation between man and God. (Isaiah 59:1-2)
 - Sin must be removed before friendship can exist. (cf. James 4:4)

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To Sin And The Sinner. (Colossians 1:20-23)

- ▶ **The MEDIUM of reconciliation is the BLOOD of His cross.**
cf. Hebrews 9:22, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." We must have remission of sins before we have reconciliation.
- ▶ Reconciliation is "Through His blood."
(cf. Ephesians 2:11-18)
 - The demand of the Law has been satisfied. (Romans 3:24-25)
 - The curse of the Law has been born. (Galatians 3:13)

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To Sin And The Sinner. (Colossians 1:20-23)

- ▶ The condition prior to reconciliation ...
ALIENS.
 - In past times they were "alienated."
Colossians 1:21; Ephesians 2:12-13
- ▶ Enemies in their mind in evil works.
(cf. Romans 5:10; cf. Ephesians 4:17-20)

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To Sin And The Sinner. (Colossians 1:20–23)

- ▶ **The GOSPEL is the MESSAGE of reconciliation.** (Colossians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:16–20; cf. 6:3)
 - Romans 1:16 – Gospel is God's power unto salvation.
- ▶ It is by obedience to the gospel that one is forgiven of his sins by the blood of Christ. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
- ▶ When one is baptized into Christ he is saved by the blood of Christ. (Romans 6:3–4; cf. Hebrews 10:22)

Christ's Preeminence

Shown In His Relationship To Sin And The Sinner. (Colossians 1:20–23)

- ▶ **Reconciliation brings OBLIGATIONS.**
- ▶ Colossians 1:22–23 tells us that we must "*stand fast in the faith*" and remain loyal and true to Him. (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:58)

The Preeminence Of Jesus Is Shown By His Relationships To:

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|-------------------|------------------------------|
| ▶ God | ▶ Church |
| ◦ Image | ◦ Head |
| ◦ Fulness | ◦ Beginning |
| | ◦ Firstborn from the dead |
| ▶ Creation | ▶ Sin and Sinners |
| ◦ Firstborn | ◦ Reconciler |
| ◦ Creator | ◦ Medium: Blood of the cross |
| ◦ Goal or end | ◦ Prior Condition: Aliens |
| ◦ Sustainer | ◦ Message: Gospel |