

COLOSSIANS 1:14-20

The Pre-eminent Christ:

*The subject here is the person of Jesus Christ and these verses today provide an answer to those who would deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

*Paul now jumps into one of the greatest passages in all of God's Word. We need to understand, in this age of grace, the Person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*It is hard for us to know whether Paul has finished his prayer to the Colossian believers, or whether he is continuing through these verses that we are going to study today.

*It is amazing in these verses today that His name (Jesus Christ) does not appear even once. But, as a Christian believer, we know Who Paul is talking about - the only Person Who makes salvation possible today.

Colossians 1:14 - In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

1. Only Jesus Christ and His finished work can save a sinner. Some of Christ's qualifications are:

a. He is related to God and man. Jesus Christ humbled Himself as God and became one with man.

John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 - And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

b. He was willing - to being virgin born and going to the cross for all mankind to be saved.

Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

c. He is able to save us. Only Jesus Christ could pay the price that was necessary to save us, being the perfect sinless sacrifice.

I Corinthians 6:20 - For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

d. He is the only way. Only in Christ and Him alone is there righteousness enough for us. Christ came to take away our sin, so we can be made righteous before God.

II Corinthians 5:21 - For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

2. Too often man looks every other place rather than to Christ. Man wants to incorporate his works - by doing church rituals, religion, or some kind of human effort to please God.

3. Our assurance in our salvation today is to believe in Christ's D.B.R., where we are guaranteed eternal life in the heavenlies.

Ephesians 1:13-14 - In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Eph. 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

4. This verse 14 says "we have redemption", meaning we have been redeemed. This means to buy back or to pay a ransom - to pay a price to free a person who has been captive. We were prisoners of sin, held captive by Satan and death. But Jesus Christ paid the price to deliver us and set us free (Rom. 3:23-24).
5. What was the price of this salvation? The answer is: "through his blood". Through Christ's shed blood, we have been pardoned (Rom. 3:25), redeemed (Ephesians 1:7), and justified (Rom. 5:9). The blood that Christ shed is sufficient and that alone - with no religious deed or work on our part is needed.
6. "even the forgiveness of sins" - God has cancelled our debt (sin). So being forgiven speaks of the act of God at Calvary, paying the price or penalty of mankind's sin so man can be justified and sanctified.

Colossians 1:15 - Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

1. Various religious cults today try to use this verse to teach that Jesus Christ was a created being. They try to use this verse to say Christ was not part of the Godhead and to deny the deity of Christ.
2. We see in this verse that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is the visible (seen) image of the invisible God. This image gives us two ideas:
 - a. It conveys the thought that Jesus Christ has enabled us to see what God is like. God is Spirit and therefore invisible. But God made Himself visible to mortal eyes in the Person of Christ.

John 14:9 - Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?
 - b. The word "image" also conveys the idea of a "representative". God had placed Adam on the earth to represent God's interests - but Adam failed. Therefore, God sent His only begotten Son into the world as His representative to reveal His heart of love to man.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
3. Paul says here in the last part of this verse, "the firstborn of every creature". This is where the cults try to deny the deity of Jesus Christ and say He was a created being. This is proven not to be true because the very next verse (Col. 1:16) states that He created all things.
4. Firstborn speaks of the fact that Jesus Christ was the first in resurrection. This established a new order, a one new man who will follow the Head in the resurrection at the Rapture.

Colossians 1:18 - And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:16 - For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

1. If all things were created by Him (Christ), then it is crystal clear that Jesus Christ was not a created being. Again, false teachers use verse 15 to teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was just a created being. But Jesus Christ is the Creator of everything.

2. Paul goes to great lengths to emphasize that "all things were created through Christ, whether things in heaven, or things on earth" - visible and invisible. Here Paul wants to center in on this context on what we can see and not see with the human eyes,.

Romans 1:20-23 - For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Rom. 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Rom. 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom. 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

3. Paul then proceeds to give a breakdown of what he means by things invisible - thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. These terms refer to angelic beings, although we cannot distinguish the pecking order of these beings by rank. To describe these terms, they are:
 - a. "Thrones" - this is in reference to God's throne in Heaven (Matt. 5:34). Even Satan has a throne in Revelation 2:13, where he is seated.
 - b. "Dominions" - speaks of those who have positions of lordship.
 - c. "Principalities" - refers to leaders or rulers to angelic monarchs. Remember, Christ created these various ranks of angels and He rules supreme over them.
 - d. "Powers" - are those in positions of great power and authority.
4. All these angelic beings under Satan's rule are to keep men in darkness and under their control.

Ephesians 2:2-3 - Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Eph. 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

5. Angelic beings are the occupants of the heavenly spaces, with access to earth, under their leader Satan (the god of this world and prince of the power of the air). They are invisible to us.
6. Today, just before Christ calls us up in the Rapture, Satan's influence will hit its peak - by helping to cause the Body of Christ Church to embrace apostasy.

II Thessalonians 2:1-3 - Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, 2Thess. 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 2Thess. 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

7. Paul warns the believers and even challenges them in Ephesians 4:14 - *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

Colossians 1:17 - And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

1. Paul says the Lord Jesus existed before there was any creation. If all things were created by and through Him, it only reasons that He had to exist prior to all things.

2. "by all things consist" means He is the Sustainer of the universe, where everything is held together by Christ's power. Just look up to see the moon, sun, stars, and wonder what keeps them from scattering and falling apart.
3. That word, "consist" means to stand together or keep from falling apart. Scientists call this the "nuclear glue"-gluons or laminin. We, as believers, understand that it is Christ Who holds it all together.

Hebrews 1:3 - Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Colossians 1:18 - And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

1. Who is Jesus Christ in relationship to us today in the Dispensation of Grace? He is the head of the Body of Christ Church. The head is the controller of the body, being its authority over it.

Ephesians 1:22-23 - And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Eph. 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

2. Our physical body is attached to our head and it cannot function without it. Christ, as Head of the Body Church, directs and guides it to fulfill His purpose and plan.
3. When Christ came to earth, He did not come to establish the Body of Christ Church. This was hidden from all. Jesus came to establish the Messianic Church, in which He will rule and reign on earth as the King.

Matt. 16:18 - And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ already has preeminence in the universe and in the Body.

Colossians 1:19 - For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

1. No doubt the Father was delighted in His Son's fulfillment of His purpose and God's plan. The fulness Paul is referring to is the fullness of the Godhead in Colossians 2:9 - *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*.
2. Paul was directing this statement to combat the Gnostics there at Colosse. These heretics were teaching that Christ was a kind of "halfway house" to God. They held that God could not be summed up in one being.
3. In all this, we can see the inseparable bond between God the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Son, and the Church. We are the fullness of God, which involves the fullness of Christ, which involves the fullness of the Godhead.

Ephesians 1:23 - Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Colossians 1:20 - And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

1. We will begin to see what things Christ has done for us as Paul deals with the work of Christ. Christ paid the penalty on the cross for our sins - a peace has been made between God and the sinner.
2. This is what Paul meant when he wrote in Romans 5:1 - *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*
3. Paul brings up the word "reconcile" in this verse - reconciling all things, whether things in earth or things in heaven.
 - * The word "reconcile" means to transfer from one state to another, and to be restored completely and perfectly. There are two reconciliations mentioned in this Chapter 1: ① the reconciliation of things here in verse 20 and ② the reconciliation of persons in verse 21.
4. In order for things in heaven and earth to glorify Christ, a plan of reconciliation had to be dealt with, paid for, and purged with a final and complete sacrifice. This is why Christ's work on the cross was absolutely essential.
5. Christ on the cross also defeated Satan and his angels, thereby guaranteeing their lasting defeat and their final casting into the Lake of Fire. The heavens and the earth will be restored one day.
 - a. The earthly thrones will be reconciled by the placement of the 12 apostles with Christ as King in the Kingdom.

Matthew 19:28 - And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - b. The heavenly thrones will be filled by members of the Body of Christ. Being seated with Christ as part of our reward for standing up for Christ as the Head of the Body and reach the lost.

*Next week, we will go over how Christ has reconciled with mankind.