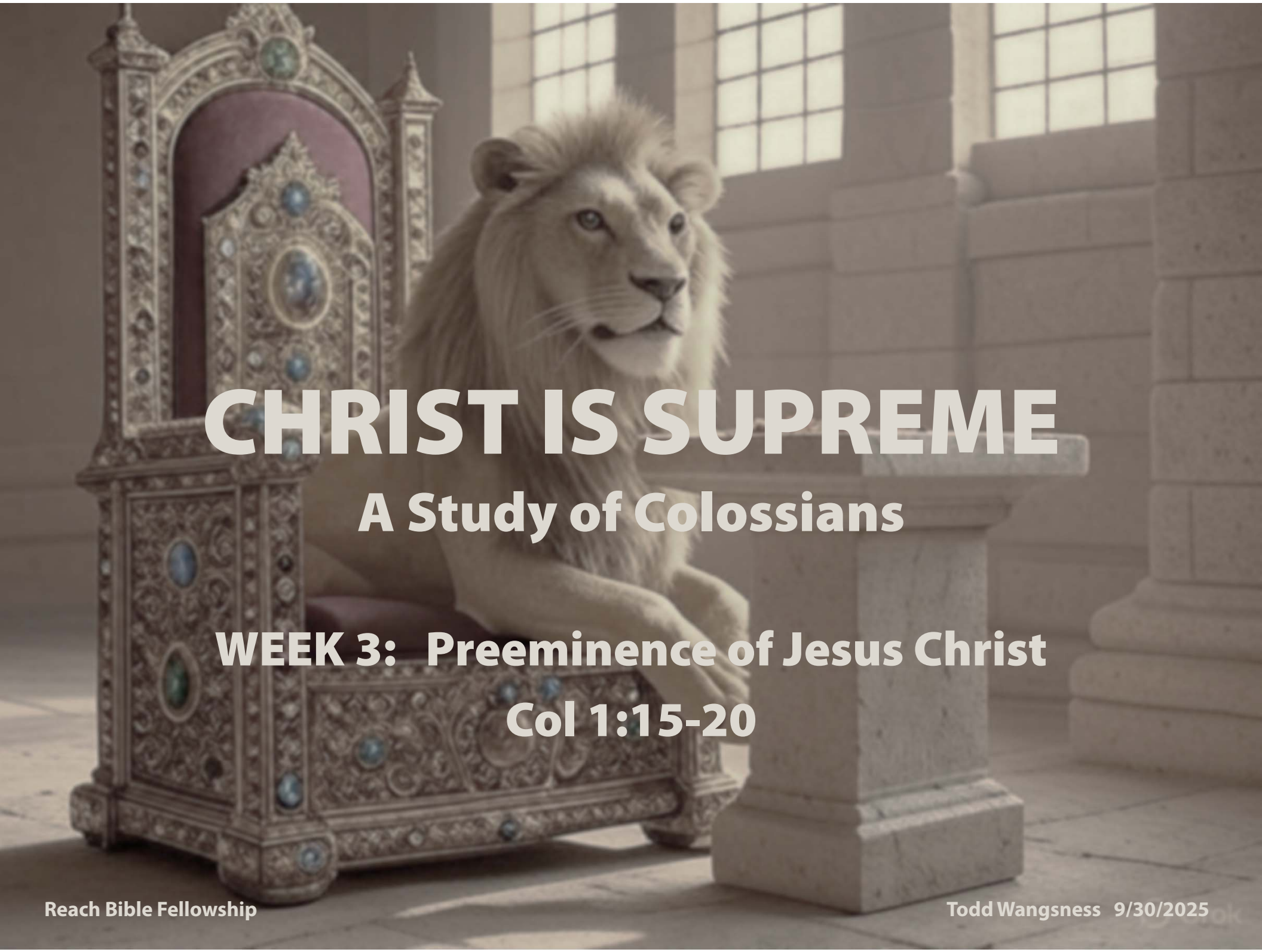


CHRIST IS SUPREME

A Study of Colossians

WEEK 3: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

Col 1:15-20

Reach Bible Fellowship

Todd Wangsness 9/30/2025

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

WEEK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Week 1	Overview	Overview of the book of Colossians
Week 2	Col 1:1 – 14	Introduction and God's Redemption
Week 3	**Col 1:15 – 20**	**The Preeminence of Jesus Christ**
Week 4	Col 1:21 – 29	The Mystery of the Ages
Week 5	Col. 2:1 – 20	The Futility of Legalism
Week 6	Col. 3:1 – 17	Set Your Mind on Things Above
Week 7	Col. 4:1 – 18	Exhortation to Prayer and Final Greetings

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

Notable quotes on the Col 1:15-20

"Christ is not one among many; He is the only one. He is the Word through whom the universe was made, and without Him, nothing would hold together. To see Him is to see the Father. He is the one who stands at the center of all human history, the one whom the God has made the pivot of His entire scheme. The devils hate Him for it, for He is both the Creator and the one who invades their territory to redeem. Christ is the point at which the infinite intersects the finite, the one through whom the Creator speaks to His creation. He is not just a figure in history but the ground of history itself."

- **C.S. Lewis**

"In Christ, we see the one who is not only the agent of creation but its goal. All things were created through Him and for Him, and His supremacy is seen in His role as the one who holds the universe together and brings it into reconciliation with God. The Christ of Colossians is no mere local deity or tribal savior; He is the one in whom the fullness of God dwells, the one who is supreme over every power and authority, whether earthly or heavenly."

- **F.F. Bruce**

"I have been saved; I am being saved; and I will be saved."

- ***Earl D. Radmacher***

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

In this section, Paul explains the fourfold relationship of Jesus Christ to creation

1. He existed before Creation

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

- **Firstborn: Greek '*prototokos*'. Where we get the English word 'prototype'**
- **The term 'firstborn' does not refer to time, but place or status**
  - **Firstborn means "of first importance" or "of first rank"**
- **Jesus was not simply the first Being created, since He Himself is the Creator of all things**
- **Paul uses the word 'image' to drive this point home**
  - **Greek: *eikon*. "An exact representation and revelation"**
- ***Heb 1:3 "… being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person"***
- ***Joh 14:9 "He who has seen Me has seen the Father"***

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

2. He created all things

Col 1:16a ***For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.***

- **Since He created "all things", He Himself is uncreated**
- **The word *for* that introduces this verse can be translated *because***
- **Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of all *because* He created all things**
  - ***Joh 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.***

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3. All things exist by, through, and for Him

Col 1:16b ***All things were created through Him and for Him.***

- **Everything exists *by* Him, *for* Him, and *through* Him**
- **Paul uses the three different prepositions (*by / through / for*) to refute the philosophy of the false teachers**
- **For centuries, Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed a *primary* cause, an *instrumental* cause, and a *final* cause**
  - **Primary Cause: The Plan**
  - **Instrumental Cause: The Power**
  - **Final Cause: The Purpose**
- **With respect to Creation …**
  - **Jesus is the Primary Cause: He Planned it**
  - **Jesus is the Instrumental Cause: He Produced it**
  - **Jesus is the Final Cause: He did it for His own pleasure**

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4. He holds all things together

Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

- **Jesus Christ, as the divine Sustainer of creation, is ultimately responsible for the coherence and stability of all matter**
- **Scientifically, we know that subatomic particles are held together by fundamental forces:**
  - **Strong nuclear force (gluons binding quarks within protons and neutrons)**
  - **Weak nuclear force (enables particle transformations by changing one type of elementary particle into another, e.g., neutrinos into electrons)**
  - **Electromagnetic force (governing interactions between charged particles)**
  - **Gravity (governing the attraction between objects with mass)**
- **From a biblical perspective, these forces can be seen as the mechanisms through which God's sustaining power operates**
- ***Heb 1:3 "… sustaining all things by His powerful word"***
- **While science attempts to describe the "how" of subatomic cohesion through physical forces, Colossians describes the ultimate "why" to God's sovereign power, with Christ as the one who sustains the universe's fundamental structures**

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

Christ is the Head of the Church

Col 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 may have the preeminence.***

- **When a person trusts Jesus to be his personal Savior, he is immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into this body**
  - ***1 Cor 12:12-13 "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ..."***
- **The word '*head*' means *source* or *origin*, as well as *leader* and *ruler***
- **Paul also uses the term *beginning*, which can be translated as *originator***
- **Each of these terms establish Jesus Christ as the Preeminent One in the Church**
- **As the Head of the church, Jesus supplies it with life through His Spirit**
  - **He gives gifts to men and women and then places these gifted people in His Church where they are effective in carrying out the ministry to His people**

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

- **Through His Word, Jesus nourishes and cleanses the church**
  - ***Eph 5:25-27, 29 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish… 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church***

- **This brings us to the theme phrase for all of Colossians**
  - ***"that in all things He may have the preeminence"***
  - **This is the only occurrence of the word preeminence in the NT!**
  - **It magnifies the unique position of Jesus Christ**
  - **Jesus is "*all and in all*" (ref Col 3:11)**
- **But the false teachers in Colossae could never give Jesus Christ the place of preeminence**
  - **According to their philosophy, He was only one of many 'emanations' from God**
  - **It is said, "If Jesus Christ is not Lord of all, He cannot be Lord at all!"**

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

Christ is the Beloved of the Father

Col 1:19-20 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

- **Those who have trusted in Jesus as their Savior are "*accepted in the Beloved*" (Eph 1:6**
- **For this reason, God can call us His beloved**
  - ***Col 3:12 "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering …"***
- **Paul takes a giant step forward in his argument when he declares that "*all the fullness should dwell*" in Jesus Christ!**
  - **'Fullness' (Greek: '*pleroma*'. The sum total of all the divine power and attributes.)**
  - **Paul uses this word eight times in his epistle to the Colossians**
  - **He is combatting the heresy of the false teachers on their own ground!**

Christ is Supreme: Preeminence of Jesus Christ

- The word *dwell* is equally important
- It means much more than merely "*to reside*"
  - The form of the verb means "*to be at home permanently*"
  - It was not something 'added' to His Being that was not natural to Him, but permanent part of His essential Being and constitution!
- The Father would not give His *pleroma* to some created being
- The fact that it *pleased the Father* to have His fullness in Christ is proof that Jesus Christ is God
  - *Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*
- Because Jesus IS GOD, He is able to do what no mere mortal could ever do: reconcile lost sinners to a Holy God!
- It is *in Christ* that God was reconciled to man; it was not his incarnation nor the fact He lived as an example among men that we are reconciled
- Rather, it was only through His death on the Cross that peace was made between God and man
  - *Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*

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What God Cannot Do

- There is one thing that God cannot do. He cannot violate His nature.
- He cannot 'overlook' sin and be true to His nature of Holiness
- Sin (Grk 'hamartia') is anything that 'misses the mark' of the absolute Holiness and Righteousness of God.
- Any action/thought/deed that violates the Holiness of God results in sin against an infinite God and – consequently – merits an infinite punishment.
- In one sense, God has never 'forgiven' a single sin…ALL sin MUST receive a just punishment (eternal separation from God).
- The punishment for our sins has been paid by Jesus on our behalf!

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When are we saved?

- We are saved in four distinct chronological senses:
- Past: We were predestined individually by God; from the foundation of the world. God foreknew us and appointed us unto salvation (predestination). [Ref. Rom 8:29-30]
- Point of conversion: At the moment each of us accept God's gift of salvation, He views as us perfect/complete in Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (justification). [Ref. Rom 5:18]
- Present: From the moment we are 'born from above', the indwelling Holy Spirit provides continuous salvation from the power of sin, working in/through us to bring us to perfection (sanctification). [Ref. Rom 6:11-14]
- Future: At a specific moment in the future, we will be glorified and given new spiritual, immortal bodies and ushered into His eternal kingdom (glorification). [Ref. Rom 8:30, 2 Cor 4:17-18]

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The Paradigm of Salvation

- **Justification (Past):** Separation from the **PENALTY OF SIN**
- **Sanctification (Present):** Separation from the **POWER OF SIN**
- **Glorification (Future):** Separation from the **PRESENCE OF SIN**

- ***Heb 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.***
- ***Joh 6:37-38 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.***
- ***Joh 10:28-29 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.***

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Questions to ponder …

- **Do the scriptures below indicate that ALL PEOPLE are given salvation? This doctrine is known as "Universalism".**
  - ***2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***
  - ***1 Tim 2:4 "[God] wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."***
  - ***Joh 12:32 "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."***
  - **Can you cite some scriptures that may refute this doctrine?**
- **John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*." Does this scripture argue for or against the doctrine of Universalism?**
- **In Romans 3:26, it says "*that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*". What does it mean that He is *just and the justifier?***