

Colossians: Jesus Our All In All

Colossians 1:15-20

Colossians 1:15

(KJV) Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

(NIV) The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Well this is profound truth that should cause us to trust and worship Jesus as God. Jesus was there at the beginning, yes, the very beginning, Genesis 1:1! *The firstborn of every creature* is not referring to baby Jesus in the manger, but is pointing to the place Jesus has in the Holy Trinity, preexisting at the time God created and spoke the universe into being. Is this amazing?

Now keeping that in mind, let's revisit 1 John, where John is by recollection and by physical revelation assuring us that he and the disciples knew Jesus also as fully man:

1John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

The Word of life communed, fellowshiped, sojourned, and taught with the disciples; yes, the same Jesus who created all that we see and all that we cannot see:

Colossians 1:15-16

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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:

If you feel like you need to fall down in surrender and worship right now, that is the precise purpose of these verses to the Colossian believers - to reinforce the truth against false teachers, to fortify faith in the true Jesus, and to produce the fruit of worship in these young believers.

As we proceed through Colossians, you will see that Paul's words to the Colossians serve a couple of purposes. This brief overview by Dr. Vernon McGee will give us a glimpse into the types of false teachings Paul was refuting in order to protect his children in Christ:

"Paul is dealing with one of the philosophies of that day, one of the mystery religions. It is called the demiurge, and it held that God created a creature just beneath Him; then that creature created a creature beneath him; then that creature created a creature beneath him. You can just keep on going down that ladder until finally you come to a creature that created this universe. These were emanations from God. Gnosticism taught that Jesus was one of

these creatures, an emanation from God. Now Paul is answering that. He says that Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of all creation, He is back of all creation. The Greek word is prototokos meaning "before all creation." He was not born in creation. He is the One who came down over nineteen hundred years ago and became flesh. He existed before any creation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (Joh 1:1-3). God the Father is the everlasting Father. God the Son is the everlasting Son. There never was a time when Christ was begotten."

Beloved, beware evil and strange doctrines that veer off the pages of Holy Scripture! Jesus is not just one of many gods, even idols we bow down to in the North American church. No! Jesus is the one true God:

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Are there any preachers or teachers you have or are listening to that habitually veer off the pages of Holy Scripture? Will you forsake their teaching in favour of spending more time in the pages of the Holy Bible?

Jesus is real, and can be experienced by you and I as if He were right here with us in the physical realm. In many ways, the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus more vividly to us through God's Word than when John was communing with his Saviour at the dinner table. Hallelujah!

John 14:16-17

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

My wife Sheri once told me that when, as a young seeker of truth, she discovered that Jesus was God, it was a game changer for her, and led her to receiving Jesus as Lord and Saviour of her life:

John 14:6-11

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is

doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

Surely these verses have helped bring many to faith in Jesus! Though this truth is too profound for our natural minds to comprehend, God reveals to us through the Holy Spirit His One and Only Son, who was with the Father in the beginning:

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

He reveals Jesus to us as a human baby that was born of a virgin on earth:

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

And God reveals Jesus to us as our real time Saviour and Friend, with us every second of every day and with us throughout all eternity:

Psalms 73:23-26

Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Through these intimate and powerful Scriptures, we experience what Paul wanted the Colossian believers to experience - the true Jesus of the Bible, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Right now is a good time to summarize the theme of the book of Colossians, that *Jesus is our all and all: He is all-creating, all-knowing, and all-sufficient for us, His beloved children!*

Colossians 1:16

(KJV) 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:

(NIV) For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Jesus as Creator. Wow! Does that expand and explode your view of Him? I never really saw Jesus as Creator in this way, so these verses are pure revelation. Jesus was there at the beginning, creating with God. And He created us in His image:

Genesis 1:26-27

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Jesus alone came to earth in human form, as a man, and I find it amazing that God walked the earth as a man among us to reveal Himself, and really to show us how He is moulding and shaping each of us into the character of His Son, while never forsaking our uniqueness, our personhood, fearfully and wonderfully made:

Psalm 139:14

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

And Jesus created everything. You may ask, did Jesus create that fast food restaurant down the street? Yes! He created the men and women who designed and built that structure, gave them wisdom and strength and resources to build it, and He provided all the food, employees, and customers to sustain it. So there!

And further, God has been enabling mankind to build structures for a long time:

Genesis 11:1-9

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Of course, pride crept in as men took opportunity to make idols of these structures and alienate themselves from God. We are little rascals at the best of times in the way we gravitate toward pride in our accomplishments! Jesus save us!

Paul continually presents Jesus as Creator in order to refute the false teachers trying to infiltrate the Colossian Church. These false teachers claimed that Jesus was just one of many created gods, and because he came in the flesh which they taught was evil, Jesus could never be Creator God. All the more reason for the Colossian believers to cling to The Jesus of the Bible and His holy Word.

Colossians 1:16 clearly reveals that Jesus created all that we can see in creation and the vast universe. And He created all that we cannot see, of all molecules, atoms, air pressure, gravity, wind, and on and on. All of the invisible realm was created by Him!

Psalm 19:1 For the director of music. A psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Jesus is King of Kings, Lord of Lords! He is over the nations, over governments, over leaders, over spiritual armies, over every authority:

whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: (Colossians 1:16)

Even as we worship Jesus through these powerful verses, we are fortifying our faith through God's unchanging Word - this is our best defence against false teachers. Paul was again pointing the spotlight on Jesus and His Word, and firmly rejecting any teaching that subtly veered off the truth. Beloved, we need to be just as diligent today in guarding our hearts against false teachings.

Paul was only pointing the Colossians toward this truth:

God wants Jesus, His Son, to be in the spotlight!

Colossians 1:17

(KJV) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

(NIV) He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Jesus is the glue, holding together the universe, the earth, you, me. What? Yes, to create something and then walk away, one would have to create that thing with an indwelling element of sustenance and maintenance - as we see through the universe He has done:

Ecclesiastes 1:4-7

Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

However, as God's own masterpiece, creation, servant, and child, He created us to need *Him* to sustain us and maintain us every second of every day. And our Father in heaven is only too happy to do so! Like a branch drawing life from the vine is our need for intimate connection with God. (See John 15)

Colossians 1:18

(KJV) 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.

(NIV) And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Jesus alone is the Head of the body, the church - not our preferences, our personal convictions, not our modified theology. Though the convictions we establish and maintain between

ourselves and God are important, ultimate faith, ultimate judgment in the church lay with Jesus. And this is so that Jesus alone would have the supremacy!

Romans 14:1-12

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

*STUDY POINT: Find all the passages in the New Testament that highlight the historical tension between the spirit and the law. Recall any struggles you have had that involved your personal convictions and preferences, and reconciling them with God and with Scripture.

Again, Paul is pushing Jesus to the forefront. The false teachers push themselves, and each other, to the forefront. But mark this, oh precious believer - Jesus will never be pushed aside or surrender His permanent glory on the throne of grace at the right hand of the Father. Never. I love Psalm 2 in the way that it portrays God's installed Son as immovable and as ultimate judge over the nations:

Psalm 2:1-12

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles." The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." I will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Colossians 1:19

*(KJV) For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;
(NIV) For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,*

You have to love this. Jesus has a position, He has a name - He is *God's Son!* The proud Father God calls Jesus the Son in whom He is well pleased:

Matthew 3:16-17

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

And all the fullness of God dwells in Jesus. Beloved, this is good news for each of us who has accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, for Jesus fulfills all righteousness for us, so that we can be the children in whom God is well-pleased!

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Think about how the truth of Colossians 1:19 could impact your walk with Jesus.

Colossians 1:20

(KJV) 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.

(NIV) and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Dear Christian, here it is. You can have peace through the blood of His cross. This verse points to His reconciliation with all things that are at odds with God. God is at peace with all things through His Son. However, because we have all fallen short of God's glorious standard, His free gift of salvation requires us to confess and receive it by faith from our hearts. And here it is:

Romans 10:9-13

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- Reverend Darren McClelland