

The Incomparable Christ of Colossians (Col. 1:13-23)

Intro: After expressing thanks for the Colossians conversation to Christ and praying for their commitment to Christ, Paul begins the body of his letter to the Colossians with a glorious presentation of Christ. We might entitle this paragraph “the incomparable Christ” or “the preeminent Christ”.

The faith of the Colossians was threatened by religious views that in their proclamation removed Christ from his true position and thus from his place in the Colossians’ hearts. Paul wanted the Colossians to understand the true nature of the Christ to whom they had been converted. He wanted them to see His preeminence in everything, so that He and He alone would be “first place” in their lives. Let’s consider Paul’s description of the Christ of the Colossians’ faith.

Christ’s preeminence in all things!

Paul shows Christ’s preeminence in relation to:

The Father

Though Jesus lived on earth as a man, Paul wanted the Colossians to know that He was unique in his relationship to God.

And He is the image of the invisible God

Jesus makes visible what would be invisible

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (John 1:18)

He who has seen Me has seen the Father; (John 14:9)

For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him,

The reason why Jesus reveals God is because in him dwells the fullness of God’s nature.

For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form (Colossians 2:9)

His beloved Son

So God confessed (Mt. 3:17 & Mt. 17:5) and so we must confess!

God has made Jesus preeminent in His relationship to the Father!

The Creation

First-born of all creation

First-born does not mean "first-created" as the J.W.'s teach but occupying the status of ownership and rule because of his relationship to the Father. This figure is based on the analogy of the first-born son having rule over the possessions of the Father. Paul gives the reason:

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or

authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Before all things--There was a time when the world was not but He was.

Creator of all things--Jesus rules because through Him all things have come into being. Cf. Jn. 1:1-3

Sustainer of all things--The whole of creation endures by his power and will.

God has made Jesus preeminent in His relationship to the creation!

The world of lost men

Redeemer and Reconciler

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

Delivered--saved out of danger

Transferred--moved to a new relationship

Redeemed--purchased by blood

Forgave--sent sin away from us

and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:21-23)

God has made Jesus preeminent in relationship to the world of lost men!

The church

He is also head of the body, the church;

The church is the people who have been saved by the blood of Christ. As a whole these constitute His body. In keeping with that figure, over them He has absolute control! His people, his members, wait eagerly for His instruction and then perform it! God has made Jesus preeminent in His relationship to the church. He is the one in charge!

Death

and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Jesus was not the first person to be raised from the dead.

Several were raised from the dead before Him and He Himself raised others; but all of them returned to the grave in time.

Jesus was the first to be raised from death to an immortal body,

never to die again! He has preeminence in death!

What difference does it make? Is this merely something for theologians to discuss? No, it is the basis for our entire lives as Christians!

Because God has made Jesus preeminent, He should be preeminent in our lives, our “all” and “in all”.

Because Jesus is the Son of God we know He is the one to love and imitate. If He is the Son of God’s love then we know that His life is the pattern for all who would seek God’s love and approval.

Because Jesus is the Creator of all we know He is the one to worship and whose purposes we serve. We were not only made by Him; but also for Him! It is our relationship to Christ that defines the meaning of our existence.

Because Jesus is the Redeemer and Reconciler of sinful men we know that He is the only Savior of mankind. It is only in His name that salvation exists, even as His apostles taught (Ac. 4:12).

Because Jesus is the head of the church we know that He is the one that the saved should honor and obey. No man on earth has any right to make laws for Him. There is no room for single lawgivers such as popes or presidents, or for a body of lawgivers such as synods and conventions. Each of us is subject to the authority of Jesus alone as expressed through the word of His apostles!

Because Jesus is the firstborn from the dead we know he is the one in whom we should place our trust and hope in death. What Paul claimed for Jesus, He claimed for Himself:

“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (Revelation 1:17-18)

We should never fear to go to any place to which Christ has the keys!

Because He conquered death, we can (1 Cor. 15:22-23).

Jesus provides the fundamental answers to the big questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?

Conclusion: Who can compare with Jesus? (Buddha? Zoroaster? Muhammad?) What religious leader in the history of the world could stand as an equal with Him? This vision of Him must burn deeply into our hearts. We must strive to know Him in all His greatness. And when we do, then it will be true as Paul spoke, "Christ will be all" to each of us. Upon this basis Paul builds the theme of Colossians. We have in Christ all we need. We are complete through him. Now the question is: God has made it so that he might have preeminence in everything! How about in your life?