
Book of Colossians

— Lesson 3 - Greatness of Christ —

Colossians 1:15-23

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Greatness of Christ as the Image of God

Colossians 1:15a

- **Image** (*eikōn*) – a visual representation. In Greek thought an image shares reality with what it represents; representation and manifestation.
- God the Father by His very nature is **invisible**. “God is spirit” (John 4:24)
- Christ took on human flesh to show the nature and character of God. “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (John 1:18).
- Jesus united perfect humanity with perfect deity in a single person. His physical death on the cross was necessary for Him to pay the price for the sins of the whole world.



Greatness of Christ as Creator of the Universe

Colossians 1:15b

- **Firstborn** (*prōtotokos*) means “first to come forth.” Indicates either “priority in time or supremacy in rank.” Depending on the context it can relate to physical birth order (Matt 1:25; Luke 2:7), but here the context indicates that Christ is preeminent over all created things.
- Some have tried to use this verse to support the idea that Christ was a created being, but in that case Paul would have used the Greek word *prōtoktisis* meaning “first-created.”
- In the next verse Paul says Christ is the Creator, so logically He Himself cannot be part of creation.



Greatness of Christ as Creator of the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

- The reason Christ is supreme over creation: **He created all things.**
- Includes things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. **Heaven and earth** is all-encompassing.
- Whether **thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities** – anything which can have authority over things in the created world. Christ made them all and is the ultimate authority over all.
- **Before all things** – Christ's eternal Sonship (John 1:1)
- **All things hold together** (*sunistēmi*) – He not only created the universe, but he maintains its stable state.



Greatness of Christ as Head over the Church

Colossians 1:18

- If the Church is viewed as a **body**, then Christ would be the **head**. Christ is the master or Lord over the Church.
- He is the **beginning** (*archē*) – “the person who starts or leads.”
- **Firstborn** from the dead (*prōtotokos*) – describes Christ’s resurrection from the dead where it means “the first to come forth.” Jesus was the first person to have the kind of resurrection which includes a glorified body.
- He Himself will come to have **first place in everything** – Christ is preeminent over the Church which He began and sustains, just as He is preeminent over all of creation.



Greatness of Christ as Savior of the World

Colossians 1:19-20

- **Fullness** (*plērōma*) – all the fullness of deity is not divided among a group of spirits, but it fully dwells in Christ alone.
- To **dwell** (*katoikeō*) – “to house permanently.” In Christ the fullness of deity was a permanent aspect of His nature.
- **Reconcile** (*apokatallassō*) – restoring those who are hostile to a state of peace. God is the only one with power to reconcile to Himself.
- He **made peace through the blood of His cross** – the God-Man was the only one who could have reconciled us to God by His death on the cross.



Greatness of Christ as Savior of the World

Colossians 1:21-22

- **And you** – Paul shifts the focus directly onto the Colossians.
- Formerly **alienated** (*apallotrioō*) from God – deliberate estrangement.
- **Hostile** in mind, doing **evil works** – the continuous status of unbelievers. A grim depiction of fallen, sinful humanity.
- **But now** He has **reconciled** you in His **fleshly body through death** – Jesus did in fact die, and this paid the death penalty for mankind.
- **Present** you before God – fit to appear directly before a holy God.
- **Holy, Blameless, Beyond Reproach** – consecrated to God, without fault, beyond accusation of sin. The believers' new status.



The condition for receiving these benefits

Colossians 1:23

- **If indeed you continue in the faith** – First Class Conditional clause: If something is true, *and we assume for the sake of argument that it is true*, then the result will occur. Puts their faithfulness in a positive light.
- **Continue** (*epimenō*) – present continuous action: “If you keep on continuing on in your faith.”
- **Firmly established** (*themelioō*) – having a firm foundation; well-grounded and unwavering. **Steadfast** (*hedraios*) – seated and unmovable. **Not moved away** (*metakineō*) – not placed somewhere else.
- “You need nothing more than what you already have.”



Application

- Let's check our ideas about Jesus. Do we have an accurate image of Him as fully human (in the best possible way) as well as fully God?
- Not only did Christ create everything, but He is actively holding it all together even now. Christ is greater than every created authority, either in heaven or on earth.
- Jesus led the way in His resurrection from the dead with a glorified body, so we now have hope of following Him.
- Let us keep on continuing on in our faith, standing firm and unmovable on the basic truths which we have learned.

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?

