

## **Jesus, Our All in All – The Preeminent One, 1:15-20**

Last week, we concluded our time together by looking at five benefits Jesus secured for those who place their trust in Him. The follower of Jesus, based on an authentic relationship with Him receives a share of His inheritance in the Kingdom, rescue from eternal separation for the Father, freedom from sin and God's just wrath, complete and ultimate forgiveness, and eternal access to heaven. If I did not say this last week, let me say it this week... because of Jesus, and only Jesus, I am blessed with the fullness of God's riches!

If you recall, the main purpose for Paul writing this letter to the church in Colosse was to warn against the false teachers present in their church and to correct the confusion created by these teachers about Christ. One of the dangerous misconceptions being taught revolved around creation. Many of the people, especially the false teachers present in the church at Colosse were confused about Jesus' role in that. It was being taught that the human body was evil because it was made up of matter and since all matter was evil, then the body of every human was too. Because of this belief, it was difficult for these new Christians to comprehend that Jesus was God incarnate, God in flesh. How could He have no sin, but also have a body, that according to the philosophers and scientists in their day, was sinful. They reasoned from this that Jesus, the sinless One, did not have a real human body.

Paul immediately recognized the dangers of this teaching because it refuted the truth of who Jesus is and challenged the authenticity of His deity. Jesus, the Christ was Immanuel, God with us, and Paul, in one of the boldest statements about His divine nature in all of Scripture intended to correct this. Look now at **Colossians 1:15-20** as we read what Paul said about Jesus, the Word who became flesh.

To fully comprehend what Paul was stating about Jesus, we must address a word found at the end of verse 18; **Preeminent**. This word, when taken from the Greek (**πρωτεύω**) *prōteuō* is a verb and means "to be first," as in rank, file, and influence. Paul, in these few verses established the truth that Jesus is **The Preeminent One!** Christ is first! In verses 15-17, Paul explains that Jesus is the Creator. In verse 18, he establishes that Jesus is also the head of the Church. And in verses 19-20, Paul informs that Jesus is beloved by the Father.

Let's look at these things. In verse 15 we see Jesus as "firstborn". He existed before creation as we know and recognize it. Firstborn does not suggest that Jesus was birthed into existence. He is outside of time and place. Jesus is not a created being because He existed prior, or before everything that was created. He is God eternal. Created things, and that includes us, have a physicality to their existence. God is His essence does not have a physicality. He is invisible. Paul says here in verse 15 and then again in verse 18, that Jesus is the only way we can see the Father. Jesus said, as recorded for us in John 14:9, "*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*" The created and natural world around us demonstrates that God is real, that He is wise, and the He is powerful, but it is only through His Son Jesus Christ where He is perfectly revealed, where

we can see God. And it was this Preeminent One, God's Son, who came into the world, as one of us, to save us. John in his gospel account tells it this way: **Read John 1:1-5.**

In verse 16 of Colossians, Paul gives us two additional details concerning Jesus. Because the false teachers at Colosse thought physical matter was evil, God could not have been the creator of the world. They reasoned that if Jesus was God, then He only controlled things in the spiritual realm. Paul explains that because Jesus is preeminent, everything spiritual and physical, was created by Him and for Him. Do you remember that part of the Colossian Heresy included Greek philosophy? Well, according to Warren Wiersbe, Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed a primary cause, an instrumental cause, and a final cause. The primary cause is the plan, the instrumental cause the power, and the final cause the purpose. When it comes to Creation, Jesus Christ is the primary cause (He planned it), the instrumental cause (He produced it), and the final cause (He did it for His own pleasure). Paul pointed out that Jesus, the uncreated eternal God, created all things, by Him and through Him, and that He has no equal.

In verse 17, Paul boldly and emphatically asserts that Jesus is the reason "all things" everything in heaven and earth, the spiritual and the physical are held together by Him. Because Jesus is the "firstborn," he has the power and authority to keep it all in place. Only God, in His completeness, Father, Son, and Spirit, existed before all of Creation, and only God can make Creation cohere. To consider Jesus anything less than God would be to dethrone Him. Paul wanted the church at Colosse to understand Jesus' supremacy and wants us to trust the words he shared with young Timothy about Jesus in 1 Timothy 6:15 that He is *"the King of kings and Lord of lords"*.

One of the greatest images of the New Testament Church is its comparison to the human body. Every person who puts their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord has been baptized by the Holy Spirit and therefore becomes a part of the body, with as Paul explains here in verse 18; Jesus is the source of the church, it is His body, and He is the leader. Paul says, Jesus is "the beginning." He also uses the word "firstborn" again. Paul is not suggesting that Jesus was the first person to be raised from death, but he is asserting that His resurrection is the most important one. Without His resurrection, there would be no possibility for others to be resurrected. Paul explains this in more detail in his letter to the Corinthians. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.** Preeminence is used nowhere else in Scripture other than here, and it describes for us that Jesus is the "firstborn", the "firstfruit", the One that the Father planned from the beginning as Creator and Savior to the World, and as creator and leader of His church. Simply put... If you do not embrace Jesus as Lord of all, then He cannot be Lord at all! He cannot be the first in your life. He cannot be the One you trust before anything or anyone else. Will today be the day you allow Him this position in your life?

Finally, verses 19 and 20 contain key details about how God views His Son. And while these details go much deeper than we have time for today, it is important to understand that Jesus is all we need. Paul teaches us that because of Christ, we are filled to completeness. We do not need to

add anything to His work or to His person. If so, then we are only making Him prominent in our life instead of giving Him preeminence. Prominence denies His deity, where preeminence recognizes it. If you want to see God, then you must see Jesus for who He is. If you want to experience God, then you must have a genuine relationship with His Son. Paul says, when you choose Jesus, you also choose to allow the fullness of God to dwell in your life. Jesus is eternal God, is willing, and ready to honor His promises to you. In our lives, in your life, He deserves preeminence. Will you choose to honor Him in this manner today?