

The Christ of Colossians

Colossians 1:1-23a

I. INTRODUCTION: I

- I. 2 The two epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, share many similarities.
 - A. Some commentators have labeled the epistle to the Ephesians as portraying the “Church of Christ.”
 - B. And, the epistle to the Colossians as portraying the “Christ of the Church.”
2. Ephesians focuses on the “*body*” while Colossians focuses on the “*head*.”
3. 3 For our time this evening I want to look at a few verses in Colossians I and examine “The Christ of Colossians.”

II. DISCUSSION:

- I. 4 Christ is Lord:
 - A. Paul greets “*the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse*” in the name of “*God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Col. 1:2).
 - (1) Paul’s identification of Jesus as “*Lord*” is familiar in the greetings of his epistles, for example, Paul as the word “*Lord*” to describe Jesus at the opening of eight of his other epistles [i.e., Romans (Rom. 1:7), 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:3), 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:2) Ephesians (Eph. 1:2), Philippians (Phil. 1:2), 2 Thessalonians (2 Thess. 1:2) Titus (Titus 1:4) and Philemon (Philem. 3)].
 - (2) Our English word “*Lord*” is from the Greek word *kurios*:
 - (a) Strong defines *kurios* as: “from kuros (supremacy); supreme in authority, i. e. ...controller; by implication Master (as a respectful title).
 - (b) Thayer adds that a *kurios* is “he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has the power of deciding; master, lord...is a title of honor, expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants salute their master...”
 - (c) Vine describes *kurios* as an adjective “signifying ‘having power’ (kuros) or ‘authority,’ is used as a noun...a title of significance...of an owner, ...of master, i.e., one to whom service is due...of an Emperor or King...”
 - (3) 5 There are many thoughts we could consider worthy of our attention when we refer to Jesus as “*Lord*”; but I’ll just mention three:
 - (a) First, is the fact that as our “*Lord*,” Jesus is our Master:
 - (i) The vast majority of folks intensely dislike having someone of authority over them: **Ex. 2:13-14**: “*And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, ‘Why are you striking your companion?’ 14 Then he said, ‘Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’*”
 - (ii) But God has given Christ the right to order us around! Matt. 28:18; He has earned that right!
 - (iii) Many claim Jesus as their Master, but it is a hollow and empty claim! **Lk. 6:46-49** (blog: “Christians Read the Bible Too Much”; BrianJones.com; what about Jn. 12:48?)
 - (iv) As surely as night follows day; the Christian should be totally obedient to Christ: Col. 3:17
 - (v) Is Jesus always our Master? Or, only when it is convenient for us or suits us?

- (b) Second, since Jesus is our “Master” or “Lord”; we are His servants!
 - (i) The apostles described themselves as a “bondservant” of Christ at least six times (Paul, Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Titus 1:1; James, Jas. 1:1; Peter, 2 Pet. 1:1; and Jude, Jd. 1).
 - (ii) The word “bondservant” (*duolos*) was used by the Greeks to describe the “lowest...in the scale of servitude...’one who gives himself up to the will of another...’” (Vine)
 - (iii) Paul had so completely surrendered his will to Christ’s will that he said: **Gal. 2:20**: “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*”
 - (iv) Can the same be said of me or of you? Imagine if Galatians 2:20 could legitimately be used in your obituary to describe you!
- (c) Third, Christ is not just any old “lord,” but He is “Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:14-15).
 - (i) Notice how Paul describes His lordship: **Eph. 1:20b-23**: “...when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”
 - (ii) Jesus became qualified to be our “Master” or “Lord,” not because He conquered the world by the sword, but because He conquered the world with His humility! **Phil. 2:5-11**
 - (iii) We can resist His “Lordship” now, for a time; but ultimately we will “bow the knee” to Him!

Acts 17:31: “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

B. Is He “Lord” of your life?

2. **6** Christ is the Son of God:

- A. Paul spoke of God as “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” and Christ as God’s “dear Son” (Col. 1:3, 13).
 - (1) No man has ever “seen” God: **Jn. 1:18**: “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (NASV: “explained Him.”; NIV: “made him known”).
 - (2) Jesus, as God’s Son is “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3; NASV: “the exact representation of His nature”; LTV: “everything about him represents God exactly”).
 - (3) You want to see God? Look at Jesus Christ! As the Son of God, Christ is a complete and perfect representation of the divine nature.
- B. Therefore it is critical that it be possible to establish the sonship of Jesus as fact:
 - (1) Miracles testified to this fact (**Jn. 14:8-11**).
 - (2) The miracle of His resurrection was the final “proof” in this regard (**Rom 1:4**: “...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”).
- C. The sonship of Jesus is the most important doctrine of the New Testament:

- (1) Establishes His authority:

Matt. 17:5: *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”*

Heb. 1:1-2: *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”*

- (2) Qualifies Him as Head and Savior:

Jn. 3:16-17: *“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. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”; Eph. 1:20-23; 5:23*

- (3) Qualifies Him as Judge:

Jn. 5:22: *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”*

Acts 17:31: *“because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”*

- D. Do you “...believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”? (Acts 8:37) If so act upon it!

- (1) If you're not a Christian, become one! Rom. 10:9-10
- (2) If you're an unfaithful Christian, renew your commitment to the Son!

3. **7** Christ is King:

- A. Colossians 1:13 records, *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”*

- B. There are four things necessary for a kingdom:

- (1) A king: Christ is *“King of kings”* (1 Tim. 6:14-15).
- (2) Subjects: Those *“translated into the kingdom”* are the subjects (Col. 1:13).
- (3) Territory: *“...all the world”* is the territory of the kingdom (Mk. 16:15).
- (4) Law: *“...the law of Christ”* is the law of the kingdom (Gal. 6:2).

- C. The kingdom of Christ is the church of Christ or *“body of Christ”* (Col. 1:13, 22, 24).

- (1) If one is *“in Christ”* and has *“put on Christ”*; then he is a member of His body (Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- (2) If you are not a member of His church, His body; you are not a citizen of His kingdom,
- (3) Hence, you cannot receive the benefits and privileges of a kingdom citizen.
- (4) You will be bound hand and foot and *“cast...into outer darkness”*: Matt. 22:1-14

- D. Is Christ your king? Are you in His kingdom? Do you fully submit to His rule?

4. **8** Christ is our redeemer:

- A. Paul wrote: *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”* (Col. 1:14).

- B. Two important points:

- (1) First, we needed to be *“redeemed”*!
 - (a) This means we were held in bondage (sin!) and a ransom had to be paid to deliver us from this bondage: **Rom. 6:17-18:** *“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”*

- (b) The ransom paid was Christ's blood: **1 Pet. 1:18-19**: "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- (c) Just think about the fact that the ransom paid to release from bondage was the "precious blood of Christ"; says at least two things:
 - (i) First, how dire our situation in bondage was: **Eph. 2:12**: "that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."
 - (ii) Second, how dear God count us: **Eph. 2:13**: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." God wants us "near" Him!
- (2) Second, our redemption is equivalent to "the forgiveness of sins."
 - (a) Redemption, "even the forgiveness of sins," is only made possible through the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - (b) There is nothing more "precious" than the "blood of Christ"! Who shed His blood for me? **Jn. 1:1-4**: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."
 - (c) Normally we think of money, or valuables, being used to pay a ransom, but: "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:18-19)

C. Christ has shed His "precious blood" to redeem you!

- (1) Have you taken advantage of that, or do you count it as nothing?!
- (2) Can you imagine facing God on the Day of Judgment and having to say, "Well, His blood just wasn't that important to me."

5. **9** Christ is the image of the invisible God:

- A. Speaking of Christ, Paul said: "Who is the image of the invisible God..." (Col. 1:15).
 - (1) God is invisible: "No man hath seen God at any time..." (Jn. 1:18).
 - (2) "God is a Spirit..." (Jn. 4:24; Lk. 24:39).
 - (3) As the image of God, Christ is the likeness of God (recall **Heb. 1:3**: "who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person...").
 - (4) Thus Christ could say, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..." (Jn. 14:9).
- B. Paul says Christians are to be "conformed to the image of" Christ (Rom. 8:29).
 - (1) Recall mathematical property that: **If a = b and b = c, therefore, a = c.**
 - (2) **a** (the image of God) = **b** (Christ),
 - (3) **b** (Christ) = **c** (the Christian is "conformed to the image of" Christ);
 - (4) Therefore, **a** (the image of God) = **c** (Christian).
 - (5) Can you think of a greater honor and privilege to be the very image of God!
 - (a) Only through being "conformed to the image of Christ"!
 - (b) But, nonetheless, we can be the very image of God! **2 Pet. 1:2-4**: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to

us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

C. Are you “conformed to the image of” Christ?

6. **10** Christ is the firstborn over all creation:

A. Paul said Christ is “...the firstborn over all creation” (Col. 1:15).

B. The word “firstborn” is from the Greek *prototokos*.

(1) *Prototokos* is used nine times in the New Testament (Matt. 1:25; Lk. 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; 11:28; 12:23; Rev. 1:5).

(2) When it is used literally it describes what we normally think of “birth order.”

(3) However, when used figuratively it expressing the idea of rank, privilege, or priority.

C. So Colossians 1:15 is not teaching Jesus is a created being.

(1) First, Jesus is not the “firstborn of creation”; rather He is “the firstborn over creation.”

(2) “...the son of God holds supreme rank in the universe. Christ is both the principle and cause of creation, and as above creation, he is both head and source of all that is now in the world.” (Patton, p. 341)

D. The firstborn among the Hebrews had distinctions, honor, and privilege; as the firstborn over every creature, Christ holds the most elevated position above all others in creation.

E. Christ is **over** creation, but is He **over** you? Do you exalt Him to that position in your life or do you allow something else to be **over** you?

7. **11** Christ is the agent of creation:

A. Paul also said of Christ that “by him were all things created...” (Col. 1:16).

B. John declared: **Jn. 1:1-3:** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

C. The Hebrew writer says: **Heb. 1:1-2:** “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;”

D. The Jehovah Witnesses us Colossians 1:15 to deny the divinity of Jesus and claim He was “created” like you and me.

(1) But the very next verse destroys that theory!

(2) Jesus is “...the firstborn over all creation” (Col. 1:15) all right, but why? Because He is the creator! “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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col. 1:16-17).

E. Do you accept Jesus as your Creator? Do you treat Him as your Creator?

8. **12** Christ is eternal:

A. Paul said, “And he is before all things...” (Col. 1:17). This affirms the preexistence of Christ.

(1) This too destroys the Jehovah’s Witness notion that Jesus is a “created” being, because only God possesses the quality of eternal existence (**Psa. 90:2:** “Before the mountains were brought

forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”).

(2) John said Christ was eternal when he wrote: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.” (Jn. 1:1-2).

(3) Jesus made His own claim to “eternalness” when He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn. 8:58).

B. Contemplation of this profound fact should give us an entirely new level of appreciation for:

(1) Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26),

(2) Bible authority (esp. in regards to the silence of the Scriptures; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11),

(3) Power of Christ in our personal walk with Him (Eph. 3:20).

C. Have you unleashed the immeasurable power of the Creator in your life?

Matt. 11:28-30: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

9. **13** Through Christ all things consist:

A. Paul writes: “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” (Col. 1:17; NASV: “all things hold together”; NLT: “he holds all creation together”).

B. The Hebrew writer confirms this relationship between Christ and His creation when he wrote that Christ is “the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power,” (Heb. 1:3; NIV: “sustaining all things by his powerful word”; NLT: “He sustains the universe by the mighty power of His command.”).

C. Thus the creation owes its complete and entire existence to Christ because:

(1) He is the Creator in the sense that He made everything (i.e., “without Him nothing was made that was made”; Jn. 1:3), but His role as Creator was not over once the universe was created!

(2) For He “sustains” or “holds together” His creation “by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3).

D. Scientists scratch their heads over the fact that the four basic forces of physics (gravity, electromagnetism, strong nuclear force, weak nuclear force) fail to fully explain the physical reality of the universe.

(1) Scientists have invented such things as “dark matter” and “dark energy” in an effort to overcome the shortcomings of their theories.

(2) Perhaps they need to look no further than Colossians 1:17: “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

E. That Christ possesses this power should bolster our faith in Him! Surely if He can create the universe and hold it together, He can hold my life together! Eph. 3:20

10. **14** Christ is the head of the church:

A. Paul goes on to tell us that Christ is “...the head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18).

B. As there is but one body (the body = the church; Eph. 4:4), there is but one head (the head = Christ).

C. Relatively few people on earth recognize this great truth about the church; even fewer appreciate the profound ramifications this has insofar as the one true church is concerned.

- (1) If you recognize and teach this great, profound truth you will be ridiculed, castigated and ostracized from “polite society.”
- (2) But at the end of the day it is the TRUTH!
- (3) Let us carefully explain it, but never apologize for it or be ashamed of it! Let it form the basis for our obedience! Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11

11. **15** Christ is the firstborn from the dead:

- A. Paul writes in Colossians 1:18 that Christ “*is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.*”
- B. This is a reference to the resurrection of Christ from the dead.
 - (1) Christ is not the firstborn from the dead because He was the first who rose from the dead.
 - (2) There were others raised from the dead before the resurrection of Christ.
 - (3) Christ is the firstborn from the dead because He was the first who rose from the dead to die no more.
 - (a) He has “*become the firstfruits of them that slept*” (1 Cor. 15:20).
 - (b) When He comes again we too will rise from the dead (**1 Cor. 15:23**: “*But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*”).
- C. The resurrection “of life” is the Christian’s “*inheritance*”; it is “*incorruptible and undefiled and...does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you*” (Jn. 5:29; 1 Pet. 1:4).
 - (1) Those outside of Christ do not share this great hope!
 - (2) Those who once were “*in Christ*” but have fallen away do not share that hope.
 - (3) Do you share that hope?

12. **16** Christ has the preeminence:

- A. Paul writes: “*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.*” (Col. 1:18; NASV: “*first place*”; NIV: “*supremacy*”)
- B. In other words, Christ “holds the first place” (Thayer); this “*preeminence*” stems from His resurrection (Rom. 1:4).
- C. Thus, the resurrection proves He is God’s Son and as a result nobody surpasses Him in regards to the physical creation (universe) or the spiritual creation (church)!
- D. In Ephesians 1:22-23 Paul states, “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”
- E. Does Christ have preeminence in your life?

13. **17** In Christ all the fullness dwells:

- A. Paul writes: “*For it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell*” (Col. 1:19).
- B. Paul expresses a similar thought in Colossians 2:9: “*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*”
- C. “*Fullness*” means all or completeness.
 - (1) Christ has all the attributes or completeness of deity.
 - (2) He is fully God.
 - (3) In whatever capacity we view Christ (Son of man, redeemer, savior, high priest, mediator, intercessor, friend, Lord, Master, King, etc.) He is fully and completely deity!

- (4) In other words, in all of these things we have the very highest and best that can be provided; we are not short-changed in anyway; God has not spared one iota; but has given us His ALL!

Rom. 5:8: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- D. This should greatly bolster our faith to know that God desires our fellowship so much that He has went to the maximum length to save us!

14. **18** Christ Is Our Reconciler:

- A. Paul writes: **Col. 1:19-22:** “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. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight...”
- B. Sin puts us at war with God; it makes us His enemy! **Rom. 8:6-8:** “...to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”
- C. According to Vine to reconcile is “to change from one condition to another, so as to remove all enmity and leave no impediment to unity and peace...”
- (1) Nothing is more upsetting as the existence of enmity between two parties because it produces alienation and makes the parties enemies.
- (2) The idea of “peace” is a key concept in reconciliation; Paul says once we are reconciled we have “peace through the blood of the cross” (v. 20).
- (3) Through the reconciliation of the cross, Jesus makes peace between man and God possible.
- (4) Our reconciliation also makes it possible for us to be presented unto God as “holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight...”
- D. Without the reconciliation provided through the blood of Christ we would be forever at war with God...His mortal enemy and subject to His eternal wrath.
- E. What about you? Are you taking full advantage of this reconciliation or do you remain an enemy of God?

III. CONCLUSION: **19**

1. The blessings we receive “in Christ” enumerated by Paul here in Colossians I are truly astounding and worthy of our constant meditation and praise.
2. However, as we consider all of these blessing “in Christ” we must remember that their effectiveness is predicated on the biggest little word in the Bible: “if.”
3. Note: **Col. 1:21-23:** “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard...”
4. Invitation

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