

Jesus Is Lord Of All

Notes from a sermon.

In Colossians 1:15-17, Jesus is supreme over creation. As we turn to verses 18-23, we discover that Jesus is also preeminent over His new creation.

The focus shifts from the old natural creation to the new spiritual creation. The creating God is the reconciling God.

We see first that He is head of the church in verses 18-19: "*And 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. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.*"

Paul uses a personal pronoun here that is very emphatic. It literally means, "*He Himself is the head.*" Only Jesus qualifies to be the head of the church. The word "*head*" means that Jesus is the authority, or source of the church.

We can relate to that. The head gives the body the ability to produce growth, and without it, the body would die.

Many churches seem to forget this. If Jesus Christ is not supreme in a church, then there is no church.

That was part of the trouble at Colosse. They had lost connection to Christ and as a result they were experimenting with all sorts of false doctrine and sinful behavior.

Jesus is the head of the National Road church -- not me, not John, not the elders, not the deacons. Jesus Christ is supreme over this church and we bow before His authority.

Jesus is the "*beginning*," which means He is the source.

The word actually has two meanings, "*to rule*" and "*to begin*."

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "*I will build my church.*" The church is the creation of Christ and as such we must follow His lead.

He is the "*firstborn from among the dead*," signifying that as the supreme one. His resurrection is the guarantee that we too will rise again.

I love verse 19. It gives God the Father great joy and pleasure to have ALL of "*His fullness dwell in Jesus.*" It greatly pleased the Father for the Son to have preeminence over creation and the church.

There are 3 significant truths about Jesus in this verse.

1. The fullness of God dwells "*in Him.*" It was not around, upon, or under

Him; rather it was in Him.

2. The word "dwell" means to "take up residence" and points to the incarnation. Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

3. The phrase "all His fullness" was a technical term in the vocabulary of the Gnostic false teachers.

It meant the "sum total of all the divine power and attributes."

Paul uses this term eight different times in Colossians to show the believers that Jesus is the fullness of God, and no one else.

The fact that it pleased the Father to have all His fullness dwell in Christ, is proof that Jesus Christ is God.

John 1:16: "And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." (ESV)

IN VERSES 20-23, PAUL DESCRIBES THE WORK OF JESUS IN RECONCILING LOST PEOPLE TO HIMSELF.

As people come to saving faith in Christ and are reconciled to Christ through His blood, they become members of His church, of which He is the head.

Verse 20 begins with a general statement about reconciliation: "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."

The false teachers at Colosse were teaching people that they could get closer to God through the worship of angels and by observing certain rules and regulations, but they couldn't promise total and complete reconciliation.

Unger's Bible Dictionary defines reconciliation this way: "The restoration of friendship and fellowship after estrangement. It also means to change thoroughly from one position to another."

Reconciliation happens when someone or something is completely altered and adjusted so that a relationship of peace can begin with the one with whom estrangement had taken place.

Paul establishes four elements about the reconciliation of Christ in this verse:

1. The FOCUS is to "reconcile to Himself." The focus is always to reconcile to God. The initiative and action must come from Him.

2. The SCOPE is "all things." Reconciliation involves the whole universe.

3. The RESULT is "peace." Through Jesus, our hostility with God can end.

4. The MEANS is "through His blood, shed on the cross." Salvation is only through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross as our sin payment.

Verse 21 moves from the general to the specific. Paul reminds us what we were like before we experienced peace with God: "*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.*"

• **We were "alienated."** One dictionary defines "alienate" as "to estrange; to withdraw; to make indifferent or averse where love or friendship before existed." We use the word "alien" to refer to strangers or outsiders. Apart from the grace of God, all of us are estranged from God.

• **We were "enemies."** We were not just alienated; the Bible says that we were actively hostile to God.

• **Our "minds" were at war with God.** Romans 8:7: "*For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*"(ESV)

• **Our behavior was "evil."** Bad thoughts often lead to bad behavior. What's inside will come out.

Paul's intention is not to dwell on what they were apart from Christ. Despite these negative traits, God took the initiative and extended grace:

"...Yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight."

Notice that it was "*Christ's physical body*" that reconciled us.

The false teachers in Colosse denied that Jesus had a real human body.

The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that Jesus was both God and man (cf. John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:5-11).

1 Peter 2:24: "*Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed.*"

Let's look at the three results of our reconciliation:

1. "Holy in His sight." We are "set apart" and declared holy by God.

2. "Without blemish." This word was applied to the Temple sacrifices,

which had to be free from any faults or blotches. When God looks at you, He sees no blemishes!

3. "Free from accusation." This is a legal term, which literally means, *"not to be called in."* No charge of condemnation or sentence of eternal death can ever be brought against believers in the court of divine justice.

Romans 8:33-34: *"Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died -- more than that, who was raised to life -- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."*

Paul's emphasis on our holy standing before God was a direct attack on the false teachers.

They promised a kind of *"perfection"* for those who had secret and mystical knowledge.

In essence, Paul is saying, *"You already have a perfect standing in Christ; you are holy in His sight, without any blemish, and free from any accusation. Why seek for it anywhere else?"*

Let's finish by looking at the last part of our passage, verse 23: "if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel..."

Notice that Paul says *"IF"* – this is conditional.

Paul is using an architectural image when he says, *"grounded and steadfast and not moved away."* Just as a house, firmly set on the foundation will not move, so too, if you are built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, then you will continue in your faith.

Jesus put it this way in Matthew 7:24, 26: *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock ... And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand."* (ESV)

We've discovered at least seven characteristics about Christ in our lessons so far:

1. He is the image of the invisible God (15)
2. He is the firstborn over all creation (15)
3. He created all things (16)
4. He is the head of the body, the church (18)
5. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead (18)

6. He has the fullness of God dwelling in Him (19)

7. He is reconciling all things to Himself (20)

Contrary to what the leaders of that organization in Maryland have said (I can't even call it a church): *Jesus Christ is exclusionary and must remain so!*

Because of His supremacy over all things, each of us must face a question : *Is Jesus supreme in my life?*

Some encourage people to "make" Jesus Lord of their lives, but Scripture never speaks of anyone "making" Him Lord, except God Himself.

Acts 2:36: *"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

He IS Lord of all.

The biblical mandate for both sinners and saints is not to "make" Christ Lord, but rather to bow to His lordship.

He is ever and always Lord, whether or not anyone acknowledges His lordship or surrenders to His authority.

Jesus Christ is Lord! He's Lord of Creation. He's Lord of His Church. And He's Lord of me!