

Text: Colossians 1:15-20

Meaning: Paul expounded on the Preeminence of Christ

Big Idea: Christ is preeminent over all

Objective: I want the hearers to make Christ preeminent in their lives

Theme:

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Today we continue our series through the book of Colossians entitled Jesus over everything. Today we dive into the leading passage of the entire book, Colossians 1:15-20. It is one of the most powerful Christological passages in the New Testament. It gives us a magnificent picture of the deity, the authority, and the glory of Christ. In fact, historians tell us this passage provided the words for the very first New Testament hymn that was sung in the church.

In today's passage we see the supremacy of Christ, or the preeminence of Jesus. When we hear the words supremacy or preeminence those words can seem academic, almost abstract, not concrete. What does it mean for Christ to be preeminent?

Phrase at the end of verse 18 - That in everything **HE MIGHT BE PREEMINENT**.

PREEMINENT – the word in the Greek is PROTEUO. It literally means to hold first position, with the implication of having the predominant and superior place.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?

Sports, money, kids/family, weather, education
What's in the well comes up in the bucket.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Whatever is FIRST is what is PREEMINENT in our lives. So, what is the first thing you think about in the morning? What is the last thing on your mind at night? What is the first thing on your lips when you speak? What is first in your finances? What is first in your schedule?

IS CHRIST PREEMINENT IN EVERYTHING?

READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

1. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT IN CREATION

Remember that the Apostle Paul is writing to the Colossians to combat the heretical teaching of Gnosticism. One of the doctrines the Gnostics were most confused about was Creation. They taught that matter was evil, including the human body, therefore they proposed that Christ did not have a real body since this would have put Him in contact with evil. The results of this false teaching were tragic and pervasive. Some Gnostics taught extreme asceticism, a severe form of self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence. While others supported unbridled sin, because if the body is evil anyway you might as well enjoy it to the fullest! Neither is correct. Christ created all things and gave us all things to enjoy in submission to His will.

IT JUST HAPPENED

A teenage boy told his mother one day he was now an atheist, that he didn't believe in God anymore. She quietly responded, "If there is no God, who made the world? He replied, "Nobody made it, it just happened." A few days later he came home from school and passed through the kitchen. A sandwich was sitting on the counter. He asked, "Who made the sandwich?" His mother in her best passive aggressive mom voice said, "Nobody made it, it just happened."

Beloved, the world is a lot more complex than a sandwich! Jesus made it all and is King over it all!

The Nature of Christ

Image of the Invisible God

Christ's rank as the 'image' of the Father derives from his unique relationship as pre-existent. He is the Logos from all eternity (Jn. 1:1–18), and so he is able to reflect faithfully and fully the glory of the invisible God.... 'Image' (or its equivalent terms, 'form', 'stamp', 'glory') does not suggest a mere likeness to God or a paradigm of his person. Rather it connotes a sharing in the divine life and indeed an 'objectivization' of the essence of God, so that the One who is by nature invisible comes to visible expression in the figure of his Son (see the evidence in R. P. Martin, *op.cit.*, pp. 112f.).

He is thus the 'ultimate Adam' (1 Cor. 15:45) who stands at the head of a new humanity that draws its life from him. So Jesus Christ is both the unique 'Image' and the prototype of those who owe their knowledge of God and life in God to him (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:2).¹

Firstborn of all Creation

Firstborn is a term of rank more than it is a word of time (see Ps. 89:27). The right of the firstborn was the right of privilege and priority. It was the honored position in the family. In the case of the patriarchs, we know that the honored position didn't always go to the first son born in time. Jesus is the firstborn—the highest rank—in all of creation.²

Jesus is not just another angel or man with god-like characteristics, He is, has always been, and always will be God.

¹ R. P. Martin, ["II. In the New Testament,"](#) ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 500.

His rank is beyond and above all others throughout all history and the universe.

Christ in Nature

Christ is Nature's Cause

The word CREATED means to make something that did not previously exist. So to create means to MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING.

Christ is Nature's Constancy

He is before all things and in Him all things HOLD TOGETHER.

Psalm 135

For I know that the LORD is great,
and that our Lord is above all gods.

⁶ Whatever the LORD pleases, he does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.

⁷ He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth,
who makes lightnings for the rain
and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.

2 Peter 3:7

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved....for the day of judgment

Christ sustains all things, he holds all things together.

Christ's is Nature's Consummation

² Max Anders, [Galatians-Colossians](#), vol. 8, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 283.

Scripture goes on to say that all things were created THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM.

The world was created through Christ and for Christ. At the end of our passage Paul says that through it is God's plan to RECONCILE ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF. Both CHRISTIANS and CREATION are reconciled to God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus saves people who place faith in Him, but He will also remove the very presence and evidence of sin from the world forever when He comes again. At the final eternal state Christ will remove sin from the Earth forever thus making a NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH and the glorious capital city of Heaven, the NEW JEUSALEM, will come down out of Heaven to earth where Christ will reign forever. All of creation will be transformed by Christ forever!

2. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT IN THE CHURCH

Paul writes here and says Christ is the Head of the Church. The Church is comprised of all followers of Christ everywhere. When a person trusts Christ, he is immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into this body. However, this universal body is expressed through Spirit-filled Christ centered Bible believing local churches that exist to worship Christ and make disciples of Him. No denomination or local assembly can claim to be "the body of Christ," for that body is composed of all true believers.

The church had its origin in Him, and today it has its operation in Him. As the Head of the church, Jesus Christ supplies it with life through His Spirit. He gives gifts to men, and then places these gifted people in His church that they might serve Him where they are needed. Through His Word, Jesus Christ nourishes and cleanses the church³

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 116–117.

He is the Head of the Body. This anthropomorphic imagery of the church paints a very organic and vibrant picture of what the church is and how it is supposed to function. Christ is the very head of this body, His Church.

HEAD Illustration

When we think about the head it is most often synonymous with our brains. Which begs the question here: what does our brain do? The brain controls thought, memory, emotion, touch, motor skills, vision, breathing, temperature, hunger and every process that regulates our body. Together, the brain and spinal cord that extends from it make up the central nervous system, or CNS.

Christ is the one who INITIATES THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH and He is the one who DIRECTS THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. That's why when we gather we lift up THE NAME OF JESUS – Because this is His Church and we are here to give HIM PRAISE and draw both our LIFE and our DIRECTION from Him.

Christ's Position

Christ being the HEAD means He is the rightful leader, ruler, and ultimate owner of the Church. No believer on earth is the head of the church. This position is reserved exclusively for Jesus Christ. Various religious leaders may have founded churches, or denominations; but only Jesus Christ is the Founder of the church which is His body.

I've heard believers throughout the years refer to the church as "my church." I love my church. That's my church. When this is meant with endearment and commitment it is correct – BUT WHEN IT'S MEANT WITH ENTITLEMENT IT'S FALSE.

I'll never forget a conversation I had with a gentlemen one time who was serving in His church as a Deacon and I shared ministry we were doing and he looked at me and he said, "Well, I tell you what – that won't happen at my church." Low and behold it was much longer after that He was out of that church.

Beloved, JESUS WILL NOT SHARE HIS GLORY WITH ANY ONE MAN. THIS CHURCH IS HIS – IT'S NOT MINE OR YOURS OR ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL'S – IT'S CHRIST'S – AND THE MOMENT WE BEGIN TO GLORIFY A MAN OR MEN OVER GOD YOU CAN WRITE ICHABOD (THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED) OVER THE DOORS AND LOCK THEM UP FOR GOOD BECAUSE JESUS IS NOT IN THAT PLACE.

That's why it's so important that we always come in here prayed up and humbly prepared to receive WHAT CHRIST JESUS HAS FOR US.

Christ's Resurrection

Paul says Christ is the firstborn from the dead, meaning He is the firstfruits of the resurrection. His resurrection is the precursory event for all mankind, and His resurrected body is representative of what the Christian's resurrected body will be like.

With all do respect to my Catholic friends, Christ on a crucifix is not the appropriate picture of His being the Head of the Body. Christ died once for all mankind, He need not be crucified again, and He is now risen and seated at the right hand of God on high in complete authority over this world and His Church!

Church – we serve a RISEN SAVIOR!

HE LIVES HYMN

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart

3. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT THROUGH THE CROSS

Reconcile – speaks of reestablishing proper relations. In other words mankind had a prior right relationship with God that was broken and Jesus came to bring us back to God and His original design.

Our sin is what separated us from God, His original intent was not for sin and death in the world, it was life and peace. But our sin brought death and separation, but Jesus's sacrifice on the cross was the sufficient offering of peace to bring us back into right relationship.

Through the cross CHRIST SAVED THE CHURCH and HE SAVED CREATION.

Romans 8:19-24

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved.

COPERNICUS DISCOVERS PLANETS ROTATE AROUND THE SUN

The ancient Greek philosophers, whose ideas shaped the worldview of Western Civilization leading up to the Scientific Revolution in the sixteenth century, had conflicting theories about why the planets moved across the sky. One camp thought that the planets orbited around the Sun, but Aristotle, whose ideas prevailed, believed that the planets and the Sun orbited Earth. He saw no sign that the Earth was in motion: no perpetual wind blew over the surface of the Earth, and a ball thrown straight up into the air doesn't land behind the thrower, as Aristotle assumed it would if the Earth were moving. For Aristotle, this meant that the Earth had to be stationary, and the planets, the Sun, and the fixed dome of stars rotated around Earth.

For nearly 1,000 years, Aristotle's view of a stationary Earth at the center of a revolving universe dominated natural philosophy, the name that scholars of the time used for studies of the physical world....In 1515, a Polish priest named Nicolaus Copernicus proposed that the Earth was a planet like Venus or Saturn, and that all planets circled the Sun. Afraid of criticism, he did not publish his theory until 1543, shortly before his death.

But the evidence for a heliocentric solar system gradually mounted. When Galileo pointed his telescope into the night sky in 1610, he saw for the first time in human history that moons orbited Jupiter. If Aristotle were right about all things orbiting Earth, then these moons could not exist. Galileo also observed the phases of Venus, which proved that the planet orbits the Sun. Galileo...was tried for heresy under the Roman Inquisition and placed under house arrest for life.

At about the same time, German mathematician Johannes Kepler was publishing a series of laws that describe the orbits of the planets around the Sun. Still in use today, the mathematical equations provided accurate predictions of the planets' movement under Copernican theory. In 1687, Isaac Newton put the final nail in the

coffin for the Aristotelian, geocentric view of the Universe. Building on Kepler's laws, Newton explained why the planets moved as they did around the Sun and he gave the force that kept them in check a name: gravity.

Of all discoveries and opinions, none may have exerted a greater effect on the human spirit than the doctrine of Copernicus. The world has scarcely become known as round and complete in itself when it was asked to waive the tremendous privilege of being the center of the universe." —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Beloved – of all the discoveries and opinions of this life, none has a greater effect than when we realize WE ARE NOT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE – THE SON (S-O-N) IS!

The world does not revolve around us – the universe, all things whether visible or invisible – all things revolve around CHRIST!

It's only when we allow CHRIST JESUS TO BE THE CENTER OF OUR WORLD THAT SALVATION COMES AND EVERYTHING CHANGES.

So, is the SON the center of your world? Most people serve as the center of their own universe and all the stuff of life revolves around them. Job, family, money, sports, hobbies, leisure, pleasure – it all revolves around ME.

For the child of God – CHRIST IS THE CENTER and everything else finds it's place around HIS WILL. Jesus – this is YOUR FAMILY, YOUR JOB, YOUR MONEY, YOUR LIFE – WHAT IS YOUR WILL IN THESE?