

The Bible Companion Series

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST

**"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the
beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he
might have the preeminence."**

Colossians 1:17,18

A Study of the Letter to the Colossians

A Bible-Believing Study Guide

an AV 1611 Bible Companion

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Colossians Chapter One

The Messiah Part 3

(Colossians 1:17,18)

I. Introduction

A. Continuing to work through chapter 1 of Colossians

B. Focus of the chapter is, What Christians Need to Know About Their Messiah

C. Faith is not D.I.Y.

1. Wrong faith can damn you – believe in your best efforts, the Golden Rule, Keeping the Ten Commandments, believing in angels, etc, will lead you to the devil’s hell!
2. Paul, with clear direction and inspiration from the Holy Spirit answers the heresies that swarmed around in those days of the middle of the First Century
 - a. It is so easy to make everything fit your own private interpretation
 - b. And as quickly as churches sprung up, men and women teachers would creep in and turn people’s attention away from the simplicity of Christ (2Cor 11:2-4)
 - 1) O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen. 1 Timothy 6:20-21
 - 2) Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 2 Timothy 2:18
 - 3) 2Pe 2:1-3 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.
 - 4) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 1 John 4:3
 - 5) For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 2 John 7

3. What people were being taught wrongly about the Messiah in the first century

- a. Gnosticism was perhaps the most dangerous heresy that threatened the early church during the first three centuries. Influenced by such philosophers as Plato, Gnosticism is based on two false premises.
 - 1) First, that everything physical is inherently evil and everything spiritual is good.
 - 2) Second, Gnostics claim to possess an elevated knowledge, a “higher truth” known only to a certain few. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word gnosis which means “to know.” Gnostics claim to possess a higher knowledge, not from the Bible, but acquired on some mystical higher plane of existence. Gnostics see themselves as a privileged class elevated above everybody else by their higher, deeper knowledge of God.
- b. Gnostics have blended into many religions – they believed and taught:
 - 1) That the world was created by another god other than Jehovah God.
 - a) The Son of Jehovah, Jesus, would not have created a flawed world.
 - 2) Believed that Jesus was merely a specially blessed prophet
 - a) That when Jesus was baptized, God “adopted” the human Jesus as his special son and gave him an extra measure of divine power (dynamis, in Greek). His spirit descended upon Him at His baptism, but left Him just before His crucifixion. (Islam)

- b) God, having compassion on the human race, sent his Son only to show them the way to salvation, but not to actually BE the way
 - c) Jesus only seemed human and only appeared to die, for God cannot die. So, Jesus could NOT have been GOD.
- 3) Taught that salvation is gained through the acquisition of divine knowledge which frees one from the illusions of darkness (visions, miracles, manifestations)
- a) Secret revelations. The Gnostic teachers taught that the apostles had secretly revealed their teachings to only a few close disciples, and without this hidden knowledge salvation is not possible.
 - b) Although they claim to follow Jesus Christ and His original teachings, Gnostics contradict Him at every turn. Jesus said nothing about salvation through knowledge, but by faith in Him as Saviour from sin. (Ephesians 2:8-9). Furthermore, the salvation Christ offers is free and available to everyone (John 3:16), not just a select few who have acquired a special revelation.
- 4) Believed in Soul-sleep. Many rejected the doctrine of the intermediate state of the dead and the resurrection.
- 5) Practiced a rigorous asceticism while others maintained an openly sensual lifestyle
- 6) Worshipped angels
- 7) Praised their own will-power and humility!
- c. Gnosticism is based on a mystical, intuitive, subjective, inward, emotional approach to truth which is not new at all. It is very old, going back in some form to the Garden of Eden, where Satan questioned God and the words He spoke and convinced Adam and Eve to reject them and accept a lie.

D. That's why we STAY with the Bible only – and let the Bible interpret itself, always testing what we believe, and allowing what we believe to be tested!

II. LAST WEEK – Who Jesus Is (1:16)

A. He is the Image of the invisible God – He is what God is like, if He were here!

B. He is the Firstborn amongst all things – the Lord of this universe!

- 1. Greater than everything He created
- 2. No worshipping of anything that is made

C. The Creator of ALL things – all things came from HIS designs

- 1. No worshipping angels! Jesus made them!
- 2. Jesus gave all things, whether visible or invisible, the power to be.

D. Tonight, we continue to discover Who Jesus is!

III. Lessons

A. He is ETERNAL – He IS (existed) before all created things (Col 1:17)

- 1. What a tough thing to grasp
 - a. We have a beginning – our conception, and birth
 - b. We live and we die
 - c. God doesn't – always has been, is, and always will be
 - d. The secularists, and evolutionists believe in eternity
 - 1) Believe that some unbelievably dense dot always has existed, and then one day exploded – the Big Bang
 - 2) It created everything that there is
 - 3) It is expanding and cooling off

- 4) It will continue to do so forever and ever, until there is nothing left but cold dark empty space
 - 5) Wow!
 - 6) No God. Only slow death. And they call that reality!
- e. No one created God
2. Has always existed (Mic 5:2)
- a. That's a wild thing – that this Man from Galilee... has always existed
 - 1) Not as a Man, but as God the Word (1John 5:7)
 - b. Only GOD is able to say, I have always been, and am, and always will be
 - c. Yet Jesus says it as well (John 8:56-59)
 - d. YET, Jesus had a beginning AS a Man – yet He is eternal!
 - e. When the universe had its beginning, Christ already existed, thus by definition He must be eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2; 8:58; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 22:13).
 - f. Jesus IS the very beginning, and the very end.
3. That's why you can pray to JESUS, because HE is the eternal God in flesh (John 1:14)!
4. That makes Jesus more important than all "things"

B. He is the SUSTAINER of ALL things (this Universe) (1:17) – He holds everything together!

1. Jesus is not only the Creator, but also the Sustainer of everything
 - a. Paul makes this statement almost as if it is not that great!!! Kind of like when Moses describes God creating the stars in Genesis 1:16
2. By him all things consist
 - a. Holds everything together
 - 1) If He didn't sustain this universe, it would fly apart, fall apart and self-destruct
 - 2) Shows how fragile this universe is
 - b. He keeps everything in motion
 - 1) Supplies all the energy needed for this universe to exist
 - 2) It is mind-blowing!
3. He is the Strong Force that bonds all matter together
 - a. He holds everything IN an atom together
 - b. He holds the molecules together
 - c. He holds our plant together
 - d. He holds our solar system together
 - e. He holds our galaxy together
4. Best of all, He holds YOU together
 - a. Giving you a sound mind (1Tim 1:7)
 - b. Holding your marriage together
 - c. Holding your car together
 - d. Holding this church together
 - e. When He says for everything to stay together, IT WILL
 - f. And when he says THAT'S it, well, then everything will fly apart!

C. He is the HEAD of the body, the Church (1:18)

1. Jesus is the Head
 - a. Paul uses the human body as a metaphor for the church, of which Christ serves as the "head."

- b. Just as a body is controlled from the brain, so Christ controls every part of the church and gives it life and direction (Eph. 4:15; 5:23 see notes on 1 Cor. 12:4-27).
 - c. If Jesus is the Head of the universe, shouldn't He be the head of the Church???
 - d. He is HEAD, THE authority of Christianity, not because of His sovereignty, or His Creative powers, but because of His resurrection – earned Him the right to be Lord (Philp 2:8-11)
 - e. Is He the Lord of YOUR life (Luke 6:46)?
 - 1) Lord over your words you say? The way you talk? He is supposed to be!
 - 2) Lord over your time? And money?
 - 3) Lord over your decisions? Do you even PRAY about what God would have you do?
 - 4) Lord over your fears?
 - 5) Is he Lord over what you believe? Or do you just pick and choose?
 - f. Jesus is the HEAD
2. Christians are His Body
- a. Why does Paul call us “the body”?
 - 1) Because that is how he wants us to be seen in the world today
 - 2) As HE would be if He were here
 - 3) His hands, His feet. His heart, His eyes, His words
 - 4) All of us working together as ONE Body – under HIM as the head, who directs the hands, the feet, the tongue, the eyes!
 - b. We were saved to be a Church, not just individuals – but an assembly of believers, with Christ as our head, and we all obeying HIM
3. He is the BEGINNING (1:18) of the Church
- a. Beginning means “cause,” or “origin”. He is the “origin” from which the church comes, or the “cause” of her existence.
 - b. That means Jesus started the Church – Jesus called it MY Church (Mt 16:18)
 - c. It was NOT Peter's idea, nor a Pope's, nor Moses
 - d. The Church was something completely NEW
 - e. And it began with Jesus
 - f. The church had its origins in the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:4), and He gave life to the church through His sacrificial death and resurrection to become its Sovereign Head.
4. He is the POWER of the Church - The FIRSTBORN Son of God, from the dead
- a. Describing His humanity (He died), and His resurrection – great power!
 - b. Jesus was the First Man to be resurrected, never to die again. Of all who have been or ever will be raised from the dead, and that includes all men (John 5:28-29), Christ is supreme, because he was the first!
 - c. Describing the power upon which Christ's church is built – upon the power of an endless life (Heb 7:24,25)

D. Why is He all that? So That in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

- 1. All of the above was written to establish that Jesus is ALL there is to our religion (Philp 1:21) for me to live is CHRIST, not catholic, Protestant, Baptist, non-denominational!
- 2. He HAS the pre-eminence – at least He should!
 - a. NOT priority (like the first of *many* things)
 - b. But THE only Person to worship as God!
 - c. Yes, GOD the Father MUST have pre-eminence – no glory given to any other (Isa 42:8)
 - d. But the SON also has the pre-eminence! (John 5:23)
 - 1) More important than all the laws put together (Heb 3:3)
 - 2) More important than arch-angels, devils, kings, prime ministers (Philp 2:9,10)

- 3) He is greater than the whole world put together
3. Jesus should hold first place in the believer's life. This occurs when one bows to His authority, obeys His Word, yields to His Spirit, submits to His church leaders, does His will, and bestows their chief affections on Him.
 - a. What does a church look like when Jesus does NOT have the pre-eminence?
 - 1) He is referred to in church, but not obeyed
 - 2) People are made to be super important – their needs and issues overrule preaching
 - 3) Jesus is a small part of the church service, but humour, politics, social issues and needs are the main stay
 - 4) The building has all the awe, and not the truths about Jesus!
 - b. What does a church look like when Jesus DOES have the pre-eminence?
 - 1) Jesus is all we talk about at church
 - 2) WE decrease in importance (John 3:30)
 - 3) The word of God is obeyed – not just listened to (James 1:22)
 - 4) Where we meet, does not really matter

IV. Conclusion

A. How awesome is the lowly Jesus?

1. This Man from Galilee...
2. He is the Image of the invisible God – He is what God is like, if He were here!
3. The Firstborn of every creature – the Lord of this universe!
4. The Creator of ALL things – all things came from HIS designs
5. He is Eternal – Existed before all things
6. He is the Sustainer of the entire Universe (1:17)
7. He is the HEAD of the body, the Church (1:18)

B. But why all the almost tedious descriptions of who Jesus is?

1. To prove that Jesus is ALL God, and worthy of ALL worship and submission!
2. Because there were some smooth talkers who used fancy talk, and powerful persuasion to move people away from their focus on Jesus, onto their religion, philosophies, false sciences, feelings, fears, etc!

C. More Next Week