

The Supremacy of Christ

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[0 : 00] Well, if you take your Bibles and turn to Colossians 1, a passage that our brother will be preaching from, Colossians chapter 1, and I'll read beginning at verse 14 and read to the end of verse 20.

Colossians 1 and verse 14. Colossians 1 and verse 14.

Colossians 1 and verse 14. All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

Amen. Amen. I would like to draw your attention to Colossians chapter 2. Chapter 1, 14 to 20 is what we'll be reflecting on.

[1 : 44] Chapter 2, verse 9 and 10 constitutes something of the gist of what I hope to be saying to you this morning.

Paul writes concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, for in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Now, Paul's letter to the Colossians was occasioned by the threat of the so-called Colossian heresy.

Epaphras, the founder of the Colossian church, was so concerned about this heresy that he made the long journey from Colossae to Rome to consult with Paul, who was a prisoner there.

Paul responded to the report with this letter, which he sent to Colossae by the hand of a man called Tychicus, who was at the time accompanying the runaway slave, Onesimus, back to his master, Philemon, who was a member of the Colossian church.

[3 : 22] Epaphras remained behind in Rome, perhaps to receive further instruction from Paul. Now, one of you might be asking, what was the Colossian heresy?

It would appear from Colossians 2 and verse 8 that it had to do with philosophy. The philosophy in question had at its core the belief in the ruling spirits, the angels, the demons of the universe, who were regarded as intermediary beings between God and mankind, who were seen to share authority with God and to exercise control over people's lives, and who were therefore to be worshipped.

Gentiles served this or these demonic spirits as gods. The Jews, though knowing the one and true God, sometimes were led astray by these demonic spirits.

The philosophy in question might also have had something to do with a belief that God is good but matter is evil.

that Jesus Christ, who appeared to be matter, was merely one of a series of emanations descending from God.

[5 : 04] He wasn't truly human. Rather, he was a being higher than a human being, but less than God.

This philosophy was also rooted in what was known as asceticism. Asceticism denied that the believer can attain to any perfection without submission to negative ordinances, negative commands.

And Paul was concerned about this. And his concern related to the fact that this philosophy posed a threat to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And it posed a threat to the gospel in three respects. First, it denied that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ.

Colossians 2 verse 9. Secondly, it denied that Christians were complete in Christ. Colossians 2 verse 10.

[6 : 24] And then thirdly, it tried to supplement the freedom that we have in Christ by introducing other ways of heightening the Christian experience, Christian spirituality.

In other words, they were saying that Christianity needed more for its salvation to be really meaningful.

They needed more. Christians and Christianity at large needed more than what could be found in Jesus Christ. So the purpose of Paul's letter was meant to ground and settle the Colossians in their knowledge of Christ and against this error.

So what Paul was arguing, basically, was that this Jesus who was being despised and looked down upon was in fact God.

God in the flesh. He was supreme over all creation. He was over creation. He was over creation. And he is the one who must be worshipped.

[7 : 50] And in this thesis, which he outlines, particularly in the first chapter of the book, we find that point well made.

And it is to this thesis that I wish to draw your attention this morning, albeit briefly. And I want to do three things this morning.

First, to list the characteristics of Christ as found in this passage. And then secondly, to lift out five of those characteristics that have immediate relevance to combating the Colossian heresy.

And then to bring some applications from there. Let's begin then and look at the litany of truths about Jesus in the book of Colossians and particularly in this first chapter.

Paul writes many things about Jesus. And we won't have time to work through all of these things. And what I want to do in this point is to merely state them.

[9 : 10] They were read to us earlier on, but I want us to list them carefully. First, we are told in verse 14 that in him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

There is no forgiveness to be found in anyone else. There is no forgiveness to be found anywhere else but in Jesus.

He is the invisible God, the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn of all creation. By him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, rulers, authorities.

All things were created through him. All things were created for him. He is before all things.

In him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning. He is the firstborn from the dead.

[10 : 29] He reconciles all things in himself, whether on earth or in heaven. He makes peace by the blood of his cross.

He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the firstborn from the dead. In Jesus is to be found, to be found a sufficiency and inadequacy that we cannot find anywhere else.

Well, that's about the litany of truths about Jesus Christ. Let's come in the second place and look at the characteristics of Christ that are immediately relevant to combating the Colossian heresy.

Just five things we lift out of that long list of things. First, he is the image of the invisible God.

You will note that in verse 15. He is the image of the invisible God. What does it mean for Christ to be the image of the invisible God?

[11 : 46] God is invisible, which means, of course, that we cannot see him. Even if we had to bring his nature, and I have to say this reverently, under a microscope, we cannot see anything.

We know of microorganisms that appear invisible, but when we bring them under a microscope, we find that, in fact, they can be seen.

But God is invisible. He cannot be seen. It is impossible for us to see him.

However, through the incarnation of Christ, the invisible God was made visible.

God's invisibility could be seen. Christ images God in a manner similar to the way a mirror images an object.

[12 : 57] Hebrews 1 verse 3 says he is the exact representation of the image of God. So if you want to see God, you must look at Christ.

And in Christ, you will see an exact representation of that image. Secondly, he is the firstborn over all creation.

The firstborn. Verse 15. What are we to understand by that? Well, the firstborn is a term of preeminence and a term of dignity.

For example, in Psalm 89 and verse 27, David was said to have been the firstborn. God says about him, I will make him the firstborn.

The highest of the king of the kings of the earth. The Lord Jesus Christ was a firstborn in that sense.

[14 : 12] He was the highest. He was the greatest. He was the first.

In a manner similar to the way your president is the first.

The commander of the armed forces. Jesus is the first. Jesus is the first. He is before all things.

Before all that is. Before all that has been created ever came to be. He was. He is the first.

First. And he is not just the first. He is over it. He rules over it.

[15 : 12] He is above it. Notice in the third place. He holds all things together.

In him all things consist. We are told in verse 17. He is not just over everything.

He holds everything together. He is not just over everything. In him all things consist.

He holds the world together. He holds all history together. He holds our lives in his hands. He actively keeps them ticking by the millisecond.

Nothing can be together outside of Christ. Fourthly. He is full humanity.

[16 : 23] And full deity. Verse 19. For it pleased the father. That in him. All the fullness.

Should dwell. In him. All the fullness. Of God. Was pleased. To dwell.

In bodily form. Those that pushed. The Colossian. Heresy. Could not understand this. How could he be.

Human. A body. And also claim to be God. That's impossible. He is either.

A body. Or he is a spirit. He cannot be both. He is either human. Or he is God. He cannot be both.

[17 : 23] This is how they thought. And it was Paul's responsibility. To reveal to him. That in fact. He was. Fully God.

All that. God. Is. Christ. Is. He is. Uncreated. Essence. He is infinite.

He is unchangeable. He is omnipresent. He is omnipotent. He is infinitely holy.

And righteous. And good. All that. God is. He is. But that. Godness. God.

God. God. God. God. In flesh. That he. Dwells in flesh. Doesn't take away. His.

[18 : 19] Godness. He is fully that. But yes. He is also. Fully. Man. In chapter. Two.

And verse. Nine. This is the point he makes. Isn't it? For in him. Dwells. All the fullness. Of the Godhead. Bodily.

Now it may well be. That you don't understand this. And there is a mystery about it. But this is the truth. But there is more.

We read in verse 18. That he is the head of the church. He is the head of the church. That Jesus is head.

Means that he is. Leader of the church. And provider of the church. And the protector. Of the church.

[19 : 20] That he has a body. Of people. Means. That he is not. Alone. A people. People are with him.

A people. He redeemed. Through his blood. A people. He was raised for. A people. He circumcised.

In other words. Regenerated. A people. He changed. By his. Spirit. the people he formed into his own image, a people he freed from the handwriting of requirements which were fulfilled in him, a people who were raised with him, a people who grow in him, in knowledge and wisdom. He is their head. He is our head. He is your head, your leader, your provider, your protector.

We need to hurry on and look at some applications arising from the fact of his supremacy, his preeminence, his sufficiency.

If this is who he is, and those that held to the Colossian heresy did not understand this, if this is who he is, then what implications must of necessity arise from this?

[21 : 19] Well, first, if this is who Jesus is, they should worship him. They should not be tempted to worship angels or demons.

Angels are creatures. They are not gods. Demons are creatures. They are not gods. There are people today who are so taken up by demons. They see demons everywhere.

They almost assign the attribute of omnipresence to them. And they are limited creatures. The Colossians were therefore not to bow to angels or demons.

Paul wants this to be crystal clear to them. The angels are small. The demons are small.

Christ is all. Christ is all. Christ is great. Christ is over these thrones and dominions and principalities and authorities.

[22 : 39] They must worship him. They must honor him. He is the one who is God. Secondly, and this is a very important point, the greatest antidote to the things that distract us from Christ, angels and demons, legalism and antinomianism, worldliness, the greatest antidote to that is the possession of a clear vision of Christ.

When Christ is not preached in all his glory, when Christ is not seen in his beauty, when Christ is not appreciated as precious, we will find ourselves turning our attention to other things.

When Christ is not valued, we will be turning our attention to carnal ways, carnal things of finding joy and happiness.

And the more we give ourselves to those things, the further away we draw from Christ. When we are getting a little bored as a people of God, the answer doesn't lie in livening up the music, and I'm not saying music shouldn't be lively.

But the answer doesn't lie in livening up the music, adding things to the worship, turning to things that are more exciting.

[24 : 41] You know, when we are doing that, we are making a statement about Christ, that he is not sufficient.

He cannot give us the joy we seek. He cannot make us complete. We need Christ plus all these other things that the world has to offer.

And we need Christ plus this other thing. Or we have Christ, but we must take away something from Christ in order for us to be happy and complete.

No, no. What we need is Christ, a full Christ.

Sometimes we lack because we haven't seen the full Christ. We haven't experienced a full Christ.

[25 : 39] What we need to see is a full Christ. Seeing Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, is transforming.

If you claim to be a Christian, but you have not been transformed, it's because you haven't really seen Christ. You haven't really encountered Christ.

You must see Christ in his fullness. And when you see that, it is utterly transforming, grasping one's union with Christ in his death and resurrection, fixing one's mind on things above, where Christ is, leads to Christ-likeness.

You can't gaze upon Christ and his beauty and his glory and not want to become like him. and becoming like him. That must be the goal of sanctification.

[27 : 05] Christ is sufficient, both for justification and sanctification. You as a Christian, you as a Christian should not shortchange yourself by conforming merely to external forms of religion.

All that you need to be happy, to be joyous, to be holy, to be holy, is to be found in Christ.

And this is what Paul is saying to the Colossians. This is what Paul is reminding the Colossians about. And this is what I'm saying to you this morning.

If you would be holy, if you would be godly, if you would be complete, don't look anywhere else.

Look to Christ. For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power.

[28 : 30] Seek him, therefore. Come to him, therefore. Find your life in him, therefore. Amen. Let us pray.

O Lord our God, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for who he is as the God-man.

And we thank you for what he has accomplished for us on Calvary's cross. And because of it, we've been brought nigh unto thee.

We ask, therefore, that we would give ourselves fully in him. To find our life, to find our all in him and in him alone.

And so, help us, God. Because we pray asking these things in his name and for his glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[29 : 34] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.