

Colossians 1:15-20 “Enlarging Our View of Christ”

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And 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.

¹⁹For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and 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.

In the C.S. Lewis classic *Chronicles of Narnia* – there is a time in the story Prince Caspian when Lucy finds herself back in Narnia after a long absence.

A)She is a couple of years older now and when she see’s Alsan the Lion who represents Christ – She says – Alsan – You are so much bigger than the last time I saw you.

B)Alsan responds – I have actually not changed, but that is what happens Every year that you grow LUCY you will find me bigger!

C)That should be equally true in our relationship with Christ – If we are growing as Believers in Jesus

1)Our **View of JESUS** should be getting bigger! Our view of Jesus needs to get bigger – because our problems are getting bigger.

A)It is ironic to me that little kids – who for the most part have little problems - Eat – homework – play

B)**Little kids – often have a big view of God!**

1)So prone to pray about everything – Cold to cancer – their God can do anything

C)**We who are big kids – who often have colossal problems** – have such a small view of God

1)At least our actions seem to indicate that –

2)We often view prayer as a last resort – after we have exhausted all our efforts.

D)You would think the opposite would be true!

1)We need a Big God – because our World has Big Problems !

Last week we covered the opening verses of this epistle – V.1-14 where Paul focused on the Death of Christ

A)What the gospel is V.5-7 and What the gospel does in V.12-14

B)What the Gospel Does?

- ❖ Qualifies us – **Approved us**
- ❖ Delivered us from the power of Darkness
- ❖ Conveyed -Transferred – One kingdom to another

V.14 Redeemed us– Ransom – those you Love

V.14 **Forgiven US** - Forgiven and Forgotten

C)In light of that **Paul prayed in V.9-11 Paul prayed** for his readers in Colossae and for us who would read this 2,000 yrs later –

1)We would grow in our understanding of who Jesus is

In the verses we are looking at today Paul intends to help us move from discussing the death of Christ – to the **DEITY OF Christ!**

A)He is going to make **5 colossal statements** about Jesus that are meant to **grow our faith in Him!**

In 1893 the World’s Fair came to the city of Chicago. Which just so happened to be the home of the evangelist DL Moody!

A)One of the features of the World’s Fair was **The Parliament of World Religions**

B)The Parliament of World Religions was an attempt to get people from all of the various religions of the world together and try to come up with a way for everyone to work together, - **“COEXIST”**

C)Now Those who were friends and supporters of Moody’s, encouraged him to take advantage of this time to really speak out against other religions

1)and to expose this Parliament of World Religions for what it really was.

D)But Moody had a different approach in mind, "I don't think that's the wisest way to do it." He said, "Instead what I plan to do is to preach Christ in such a way that **He is so irresistible, that none of the other religions will even be an option.**"

E)That's what he did. And it proved to be effective.

The 1893 Chicago Crusade was probably the greatest evangelistic Endeavor of his life – 1000's saved

Paul the Apostle takes the same approach in the book of Colossians -

A)WE noted in our study last week at both campuses that the health of the church in Colossae was being threatened by a false teaching

B)Really it was a potpourri of false teachings that were circulating through the region – aimed at clouding up peoples perception of Jesus

C)Rather than **picking apart** these false teachings – one by one –

1)Paul seeks to remove all the distractions by putting the beauty, the majesty, the wonder and the sufficiency of Jesus – front and center

D)The verses we are considering today is a good example of that

1)Consider these **5 COLOSSAL STATEMENTS PAUL MAKES ABOUT JESUS!**

#1V. 15 He is the image of the invisible God

A)The Greek word translated "image" is *eikon*, from which we derive our English word *icon*. – It means "an exact image or exact representation."

B)It conveys the idea that Jesus is the absolute accurate image of God!

C)**Remember the heresy** that was circulating through the region was saying that Jesus was just an emanation –

D)Paul is wanting us to know that Jesus was the absolute accurate image of the invisible God – because – **HE WAS GOD IN HUMAN FLESH.**

The Writer of Hebrews put it this way, he said that Heb 1:3 "**Jesus is the Radiance of God's Glory and the exact representation of His being**"

A)Phillips, "*Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God.*"

B)NOTICE COL 1 V.19 **19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,**

C)This statement was really a slap in the face to those teaching the Colossian heresy for...

1)The word, "**fullness**" is the Greek word "**pleroma**".

D)It was a technical term in the vocabulary of the Gnostic false teachers themselves.

They used it to mean "the sum total of all the divine power and attributes emanating from God."

A)But Paul uses it to show, Jesus isn't one of the lesser emanation, He is the fullness, He is God!

B)The Sum total of who God is – all the fullness of God dwelt in Jesus

C)The word "**dwelt**" Paul uses is equally important.

1)"Dwell" means "to be at home permanently."

D)The Greek expert Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest, gives this insight

"using the word dwells means fullness was "not something added to His Being that was not natural to Him, but that it was part of His essential Being as part of His permanent make up."

E)Simply stated - Jesus is & was & will always be God!

If you want to know what God is like – look to, study on, read up, spend time with Jesus

A)Reminds me of the story of a little girl who was fervently drawing a picture. – Dad asked – What are you drawing – sweetie

B)Picture of God ... no one knows what God looks like **THEY WILL WHEN I AM FINISHED!**

C)PAUL says –I don't have a drawing to show you what God looks like

D)But I can tell you what God is like – Heart – Character – what is important to Him - Just look at Jesus

1) John 14:9 – **He who has seen me as seen the Father!**

E)God is invisible; but Jesus Has revealed him to us.

1)God in Human flesh – God in every way – except **His GLORY was CONCEALED.... humanity.**

Now the modern day heretic says, wait a second, it seems that the very next sentence in v.15 contradicts that idea. **He is . . . the firstborn over all creation**

A)Doesn't that seem to indicate that Jesus was created by God – so how can he be God?

B)In actuality that next statement is just the next colossal statement about Christ

#2 V.15 He is . . . the firstborn over all creation

A)Now the Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults will use this verse to erroneously say that, because Jesus was the firstborn, He was created, and therefore not eternal

B)But it is important to note that the Greek word, 'protokos', translated 'firstborn' here IS NOT referring to **First 'in chronology,**

1)but **first in priority..**

C)Solomon was not the first born son of David – but he is called the First born in Psalm 89:27 –

1)Most Prominent – picked by God above all his brothers to be the successor to the throne.

We use similar phrases today: Michelle Obama is call the First lady

A)Obviously doesn't mean that she is the first lady ever-

B)It means she is in a place of Prominence as the wife of the President of the United States.

C)To say that Jesus is the first born over all creation is saying **He holds a position of Preeminence over all of creation!**

In fact if Paul wanted to say that Jesus is the first created being – there is another word that he could have used.

A)First in Chronology is the word – Prototistos = first one created.

B)But Paul uses the word – Prototokos – which means first in priority or Preeminence.

C)This is again important today – because all the cults today – like to give Jesus a position of Prominence **but not Preeminence**

THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES – listen to how they would define Him, they would say:

- That Jehovah's first creation was "His only Begotten Son"
- That Jesus was Michael the Archangel who became a man
- That Jesus was a perfect man, not God in the flesh.
- That Jesus did not rise from the dead in his physical body, but as a spirit.
- They also claim that Jesus returned to the earth, invisibly in 1914.

The MORMONS to whom Jesus is also very important believe:

- The first spirit to be born in heaven was Jesus
- The devil was born as a spirit after Jesus "in the morning of pre-existence.
- Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers and we are all born as siblings in heaven to them both.
- Jesus sacrifice was not able to cleanse us from all of our sins

So Good Works are necessary for Salvation.

ISLAM says:

Jesus is a very great prophet, second only to Muhammad.

Jesus is not the Son of God and is certainly not divine, and he was not crucified for the sins of the world.

Now in all of these systems, Jesus is prominent, but not preeminent, He's important, but not Supreme.

A)And that basically is the same lie the false teachers in Colossae were spreading back in Paul's day.

B) Jesus was a good starting point – but if you really wanted to go deep you needed to study with us.

1) Unlock the mysteries of life

C) Paul is saying **Jesus is “first in rank or honor.**

D) Here is why - He was not Created – He is actually the Creator!

#3 V.16 Jesus is the Creator of all things!

A) The False teaching that was circulating throughout the region of Colossae said that since all Matter was evil –

Aa) **Since the world is made up of matter**

B) God could not have created it – So the world was created by one of God’s far off emanations.

C) Rather than picking apart how ridiculous that statement was – Paul simply declared this about Jesus

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

D) We read in Genesis 1:1 **“In the Beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth”** and He created them, by **His command**, out of nothing.

B) There was nothing, and God spoke, and the Universe sprang into existence.

1) What Paul is telling us here is that the One who did that was Jesus Christ.

C) The Apostle John tells us the same thing in *John chapter 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

Planet Earth sits in what is known as the Milky Way Galaxy – The Milky way galaxy is 100,000 light years in diameter. –

A) Sounds huge right? Not really – not in comparison to other Galaxies. – Andromeda is 200,000 light years in Diameter

B) The **M87 is 980,000 light years in Diameter** But **IC 1101 is 6 million l - years in diameter –**

1) Astronomers tells us there are **AT LEAST 100 billion galaxies**

C) Paul is telling us that Jesus spoke it all into existence!

D) **The heavens declare the glory of God – Psalm 19:1**

According to the Smithsonian there are 1 million species of insects identified as alive on planet earth today.

A) There are over 27,000 species of fish

B) All of this points to the creative Nature of Jesus – He is an artist – His creativity is seen in Creation.

C) But **“all things were created by him but ALSO for him”**

1) This is an astounding statement. The Greek philosophers taught that everything needed a:

[1] **Primary cause** – which is the **Plan**.

[2] **Instrumental cause** - which is the **Power**.

[3] **Final cause** - which is the **Purpose**.

D) When it comes to creation Jesus is the **Primary cause** (He Planned it), the **Instrumental cause** (He Produced it),

1) **AND the Final cause** (He did it for His own Pleasure).

This is the rub isn’t it? This is really what gets people upset

A) Not only was everything created **through Jesus**, everything was created **for Jesus**, all of creation is for His good pleasure.

B) This is what drives prideful men and women crazy, that they were created for something other than their own pleasure.

C) **The reason that people love evolution is not because it makes sense, it doesn’t, or that it is scientific, it’s not, or that there is evidence for it,**

1) IN fact the evidence is to the contrary. **The design points to a designer**

D) The reason why people embrace evolution is because evolution allows men and women to be their own gods. { **No one to Answer to**

1) Creation on the other hand puts each and every one of us under the authority of God.

E)But evolution takes us out from under that authority and allows us to be god's unto ourselves. **That is why people buy into it, and love it.**

The only problem is that being your own little god just doesn't work.

A) It doesn't work because you were designed to live in a relationship with God, you were designed to do His will, for your life

B)You were designed to walk in the plan that God has for your life.

C)We are stubborn – we wrestle with that – we think we know best

1)Frank Sinatra – I did it my way.

Jacob wrestling with God

A)Jacob had really prospered doing it his way!- Rich

B)Problem was he had burned bridges with everyone in his life

1)Ripped his brother off – Hated him – Ripped his father-in-law off - sent him away.

C)One night – news his brother was approaching with 400 men

Jacob – wrestling match – He didn't know it was God

A)Like kids God lets us think – we are strong- God lets us wrestle until we WEAR OURSELVES OUT. – had enough yet?

B)Jacob says – I am not letting you go until you Bless me – **OH REALLY**

C)YOUR NAME ?- Jacob – heel catcher – con artist

D)Hip – broke him – Israel – learn what it means to be A MAN GOVERNED BY GOD

Jesus – Take my Yoke learn of me – Yoke is easy – well fitting – burden is light

A)This is why God saved me – Qualified me – redeemed me –

B)Plan for my life that He wanted me to walk in

1)Some of you today – just need to stop wrestling with God

C)Surrender to the one who made you – Made you to live in relationship with Him

1)All things were created BY Him and FOR Him

But what Paul says next is absolutely astounding – Jesus is not just the creator of all things –

A)#4 He is the sustainer of all things V.17 He is before all things and by him all things consist.

B)ESV “**He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**”

C)Jesus is holding it all together!

D)Hebrews 1:3 **He is upholding all things by the word of His Power!**

1)Spoke the world into existence – He holds it in place by His word

Think about this: THE SUN: The Sun is 93 million miles from earth

A)The light that illuminates our days takes about eight minutes to reach us from the sun, traveling at a speed of 186,000 miles per second. **95 DEGREES TODAY**

B)What if the sun were closer ?

1)On Venus the next closest planet to the sun the surface temperature is about 875 degrees.

1)TALKING HOT –

C)What if the sun were further away ? On Mars the farthest planet from the Sun – the mercury dips to about minus 200 degrees. – REALLY COLD.

Can you imagine what would happen if Jesus Christ relinquished His sustaining power over the laws of the universe?

A)If He suspended the law of gravity only for a brief moment, we would all perish, We would go out of existence. / Fly off into Space

B)Consider, for example, what instant destruction would happen if the earth's rotation slowed down just a little.

1)Our globe is tilted on an exact angle of 23 degrees, providing us with four seasons.

C)If it were not so tilted, vapors from the oceans would move north and south and develop into monstrous continents of ice.

Did you know that the moon, too, is obviously positioned very strategically for our sakes? /

A) If it were just a little bit closer Miami would be under water for twelve hours each day due to the moon's increased gravitational pull on the Atlantic

B) And when the tide came in, it would rush like a tidal wave / Tsunami every day.

C) He upholds it all by His word!

A) **Greek Philosophers picture ATLAS – straining under the weight of the world.**

B) That is not what it says about Jesus Sustaining Power - / Done by His Word !!!!

1) Not sweating, straining - not tired; not muscles -

C) We need to hear this because – storms that blow into our lives – everything gets blown out of whack it seems

Remember the Disciples in the Storm – Jesus is sleeping – don't you care perish

A) Speaks be still – Calm like a sea of glass

B) Who is this guy that even the wind and the waves obey Him.

C) Another time – walking on the water – WAVES..... over their head were under his feet.

1) THE STORM WAS IN SUBJECTION TO HIM

Some of you need to hear this today! – Upholds..... all things word

A) That means Jesus can hold together your life!

B) Marriage that is falling apart – He can hold it together

1) Not force – you but two people submit to him and his word – He can hold it together.

C) He is able to hold together my emotions, my family, my instability

1) I forget that sometimes. Things fall apart & I get upset/ worried/ stressed out

Sometimes our dilemma is this - How do I know that He is really willing?

A) This verse – the one who holds all things together – means He was holding together **the fist** of the soldiers who beat him

B) Holding together **the cross** that he carried and was laid on

1) He was holding together **the metal spikes** that were driven into his hands and feet – the hammer that pounded them in

C) **He was holding all of that together for you – Die in your place to reconcile you to God!**

D) He gave His life – don't you know Freely gives you all things

1) God do you really love me? – Cross – yep

E) **V.20 Reconciled by the shedding of his blood!**

4 Colossal statements about Jesus

- ❖ Image of the invisible God
- ❖ Firstborn over all creation
- ❖ Creator of all things
- ❖ Sustainer of all things **ONE MORE**

#5 He is the head of the Church. V.18

A) The Gnostics taught that Christ was simply an emanation from God, specifically an Angel Who serves the Church.

B) Paul combats that not by tackling the heresy head on but he makes another colossal statement about Jesus –

1) When it comes to the Church – JESUS is the head!

C) The church is described **in a lot of different ways in the Bible**, it is called the Vineyard, it is called the flock of God,

1) It is referred to as a building made of living stones. {People}

D) But my favorite is right here, the Church is the Body of Christ and Jesus is the head.

1) See a body can't function for very long without the head, the head co-ordinates, it controls, and it gives direction.

E) CHICKEN WITH HEAD CUT OFF – ACTIVITY – ENERGY – NO LIFE

1) The last thing that you want is a Church without the head, or a church with the wrong head.

Jesus is the head of the Church – what Paul says next in v.18 tells us the reason why.

A) He is the first born from the dead

B) Now once again the term first born: isn't speaking of First in Chronology

C) Others had risen from the dead — like Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7).

1) Even in the Old Testament, there was the widow's son in the day of Elisha (II Kings 4).

Jesus was not the first to rise from the dead – Not First in Chronology but First in Importance – See, those others who rose, they all died again.

A) Jesus alone has priority, has preeminence, He is the Firstborn from the dead because He alone rose never to die again.

B) That is what qualified him to be the head of the Church

C) Noted before: When Someone predicts their own murder – and also predicts that three days later He will rise from the dead –

1) And that is exactly what He does – He is worth following.

Jesus is the head of the Church – He wants to be the head of your life!

A) NLT translates the end of v.18 this way – So He could be first in everything

B) Role he desires to have in your heart