

## Colossians 1:15-23 Enlarging Our View of Jesus

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 sees Aslan the Lion who represents Christ – **She says – Aslan – You are so much bigger than the last time I saw you.**

B) Aslan 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 –

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

1) You would think the opposite would be true!

E) 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**

Pick up tonight V.15 - Paul wants to enlarge our view of Jesus

**<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. <sup>18</sup> 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.**

Last week I noted that Paul was writing to combat a false teaching that was spreading through the region called Gnosticism.

A) The very word for Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means “to know.”

**B) The Gnostics, viewed themselves as people in the know.**

C) Gnostics considered themselves to be spiritually elite.

1) They believed they were people of superior knowledge who could help “**lesser**” Christians **attain a deeper spirituality.**

**Gnostics believed that matter or anything physical or created) was evil and that only the spirit was good.**

A) They reasoned, therefore, that God could not be involved in creation,

B) because being perfect he could not touch matter which was intrinsically evil.

RKH insight “The Gnostics taught that the world came into being through a complicated surrogate process whereby God put forth thousands of emanations (or lesser gods), each of which was a little more distant from him, so that finally there was an emanation (a little god) so distant from God that it could touch matter—and it created the world.”

C) This reasoning led to the belief that Jesus Christ, if he really was the Son of God, could not have taken on a human body because matter is evil.

1) Therefore the Gnostic taught that Jesus being was only a ghost-like phantom.

To the Gnostics, Christ was *not* Creator, the Incarnation was *not* real, and Christ was *not* enough!

A) Paul is going to combat this false heresy by telling us exactly who Jesus is!

Tonight will see 5 colossal truths - about the deity of Jesus

**#1 V. 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*. –

B) It means “an exact image or exact representation.”

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

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 <sup>19</sup> **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 Gnostic 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) “Dwelt” means “to be at home permanently.”

D) The fullness of God was permanently at home in Jesus

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

**So 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. –

B) Dad asked – What are you drawing – sweetie - A picture of God

C) The Bible says no one knows what God looks like - ..... **THEY WILL WHEN I AM FINISHED!**

D) PAUL says – I don’t have a drawing – to show you what God looks like -

E) But I can tell you what God is like – Heart – Character – what is important to Him -

1) Just look at Jesus

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

F) God in human flesh - God with skin on!!!!

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 Paul makes about Jesus

**#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, so He was created, and therefore not eternal

B) But it is important to note that the Greek word, ‘*protokos*’, translated ‘firstborn’

C) But IS NOT referring to **First ‘in chronology,**  
1) but **first in priority..**

D) In the same way that Solomon was called the first born son of David in Psalm 89:27

1) He had older brothers

E) But Solomon was the most prominent –

1) He was picked by God above all his brothers to be the successor to the throne

We use similar phrases today: Jill Biden is called 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 firstborn 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) 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 –

1) 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.*

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.

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

B) 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.*

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).

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

The reason that people love evolution is not because it makes sense, it doesn't, or that it is scientific, it's not,

A) or that there is evidence for it, IN fact the evidence is to the contrary. **The design points to a designer**

B) 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,

C) 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.**

D)But a person will never find true happiness or purpose - until they come realize -

1)I was created by God and for God  
It is to bring him pleasure that I exist.

**Now 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

**Now 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.

B)But what is the sun were closer? - On Venus the next closest planet to the sun

1)The surface temperature is about 875 degrees

**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,

B)We would go out of existence. / Fly off into Space

**C)There would be instant destruction if the earth’s rotation slowed down just a little.**

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

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

**B)Did you know that the moon is also positioned strategically for our sakes?**

**C)If it were just a little bit closer Miami would be under water for twelve hours each day**

1)due to the moon's increased gravitational pull on the Atlantic

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

**E)He upholds it all by His word!**

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

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

**B)Not sweating straining - not tired; not muscles -**

**C) Some of you need to hear this tonight! –because – storms that blow into our lives –**  
1)everything gets blown out of whack it seems

**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 pp 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/worry/ stressed out

**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 Jesus 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!**

The church is described in a lot of different ways in the Bible,

A)It is called the Vineyard, it is called the flock of God,

B)it is referred to as a building made of living stones. {People}

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

D)See A body can't function for very long with out the head,

1)the head co-ordinates, it controls, 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)Everything we believe and base our lives on  
**HINGES ON THE RESURRECTION!**

**Paul tells us how he became the head of the church**

**<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> 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 Sin of man ruined what God has created and caused man who was made by God and for God - to live in relationship with God.**

A)Our sin caused us to be alienated from God - but Jesus came to reconcile all things back to God.

B) Reconciliation is the removal of hostility and the restoring of friendly relations to parties who have been at war.

C)Paul describes this reconciliation as making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**But Paul wants us to understand just how far off we were prior to the work of Christ on the cross at Calvary**

**21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—**

**Paul tells us we were once God's enemies in two ways.**

A)First, we were enemies in [our] minds. Our thoughts and our attitudes were hostile to God.

B)Before we trusted Christ, our entire way of thinking was contrary to God's.

1)For us, and for those who have yet to be reconciled, the problem was and is simple.

C)We refused to accept God's evaluation of us as being sinners.

1)We would also not accept God's remedy for the situation—dependence on Christ.

**Second, we were enemies in [our deeds], because of [our] evil behavior.**

A)It's not just that we thought wrong; we also acted wrong.

B)Despite our active opposition to God, he reconciled us through the death of Jesus.

1)Jesus died for a race of rebels to offer them a chance to become his allies.

**C)The outcome of this reconciliation is present peace and a future presentation of ourselves before God.**

**D)The slate of sin has been wiped clean, and we look forward to the day we will stand before God  
1)and Jesus will present you holy, and blameless, (free from accusation ) and above reproach in His sight**

**So Paul has presented this wonderful picture of Jesus with these 5 colossal statements about Jesus**

- ❖ Image of the invisible God
- ❖ Firstborn over all creation -
- ❖ Creator of all things
- ❖ Sustainer of all things
- ❖ The head of the church

**He has reconciled us to God and as we wrap this up tonight - important that we don't read v.23 wrong and get confused 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.**

**Now The if of verse 23 should not be misunderstood.**

A)This verse is not saying that we will be presented holy and blameless **if** we remain faithful, as if our eternal salvation depends on our performance.

B)The Greek construction of the **if** is not an expression of doubt but an expression of confidence and is better translated as **since**.

**C) It does not mean that something shall be if something else is true;**

**1)rather it means that something was if something else is true.**

**D)Paul's point is that we have been reconciled—it is an accomplished fact.**

1)So if you are a child of God today, you will continue in the faith grounded and settled.

**E)You will not be moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard.**

**Notice the Phrase moved away:** Warren Wiersbe gives this insight

“Paul used an architectural image in this verse—a house, firmly set on the foundation. The town of Colossae was located in a region known for earthquakes, and the word translated “moved away” can mean “earthquake stricken.” Paul was saying, “If you are truly saved, and built on the solid foundation, Jesus Christ, then you will continue in the faith and nothing will move you. You have heard the Gospel and trusted Jesus Christ, and He has saved you. In other words, we are not saved by continuing in the faith. But we continue in the faith and thus prove that we are saved.”

**Paul in this section is really echoing the sentiment that Jude declared in Jude 24-25 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. - Amen.**