



ADVANCING THE GOSPEL

Colossians 1:15-23

Introduction

- In the preceding verses, Paul explained the deliverance accomplished by the work of Christ and the redemption offered in Christ.
- This “He” from verses 13–14 is now identified and qualified.
- Paul spends these eight verses in the middle of chapter 1 to describe the beauty, divinity and supremacy of Christ.
- Paul uses these verses to describe in depth why Christ is supreme and deserving of all worship and allegiance.

Colossians 1:15-17

Creation

- These verses in Colossians 1 are central not only to Paul's individual letter to the Colossians, but to the entire body of Scripture.
- Jesus is above all. Jesus is before all. Jesus, in all things, is supreme. And the man Jesus, who lived and walked the earth, was more than fully human, He was fully divine.
- Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Good News. He is the Gospel. And Paul wants his readers to know the true nature of the man Jesus; to understand the full nature of God in Christ.

Creation

- In verse 15, Paul describes Jesus as the image of the invisible God.
- Paul does this to “show his conviction that the beloved Son is the likeness, representation, reflection, and manifestation of God.”
- Jesus made the invisible visible. And He did this in such a way to bring further glory to God, not take away from it.
- Jesus wasn't a crafted image. He wasn't a formed idol. For people to place their hope in Christ wasn't a wrong thing.

Creation

- Paul also uses an interesting phrase in verse 15. Paul writes that Jesus is the “firstborn of all creation.”
- What Paul is NOT doing here is saying that Jesus was a created being.
- A popular third century heresy concerning Christ’s divinity and oneness with God was the belief that there was a time before Christ existed.
- This heretical teaching, taught by Arius, used this verse as evidence. However, the Greek word used here is *prōtótokos* is not used in the literal sense but the metaphorical sense.

Creation

- Christ deserves the ultimate status.
- Nothing in creation compares to Him. He has no rival. He has no equal.
- Creation flowed from Christ and is sustained by Him.
- This is how we find purpose in Christ's supremacy: we were created for Him.
- There is a beautiful connection here with creation and, what will be mentioned later, redemption, and how they find their origin in Christ.

Creation

- Paul uses key phrases in verse 16 to show the complete and total reign of Christ over the universe.
- Knowing this, believers find hope and purpose that they were made for Christ and are sustained by Christ.
- What He created He continues to maintain. He's not absent.
- Moreover, as He maintains the created order, He is the purpose of it all. He is the aim and agency of all creation.

Colossians 1:18-20

The Church

- Paul continues with Christ's supremacy and authority, but he adds something in these next verses that transitions to something deeper.
- Paul started with creation, now he moves on to the Church, the body of believers, God's family, and the hope of the kingdom to come.
- He starts with creation and now moves to new creation.
- Christ is both the life in creation and the life in the Church.
- He is both the source of creation and God's family

The Church

- Paul goes against the false teaching of the day and points to Christ as the one who is the true and only source of life for the body.
- Paul qualifies Christ as the source of life even further in verse 18 when he writes that Christ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.
- Here again Paul builds on the idea of Christ as the source of new creation.
- His Resurrection marks the beginning, the start of the process that will culminate in His future return.

The Church

- Death could not hold down the Messiah.
- Because of this, believers now have life in Him.
- It was pleasing for God to dwell among humanity in Christ, just as it was pleasing for God to work through Christ to save humanity by way of His death (verses 19–20).
- This victory, achieved by Christ's rising from the grave, gives life to those who accept it in faith, as well as start their own process of future resurrection; entering into life as God intended.

Colossians 1:21-23

Walking in the Faith

- Paul encourages the Colossians first by rejoicing in their salvation, but then exhorts them to keep walking in the faith.
- In verse 21, Paul identifies their status with God before Christ (alienated). They were hostile, Paul says, in their mind, which produced a life of evil deeds.
- Paul teaches a lesson concerning the nature of our hearts and minds before Christ. The Colossians engaged in evil deeds because they were hostile in mind. It wasn't that they were hostile in mind because of their evil deeds.

Walking in the Faith

- But instead of alienation, humanity has the opportunity to belong in God's kingdom. Christ came to save humanity from its rebellious hearts.
- Paul shows in verse 22 just how God did this: through Jesus. "The reconciliatory means was Christ's fleshly body, the reconciliatory goal was the Colossians' right standing before God."
- Because of all that God has done, Paul urges the Colossians to stay rooted in the Gospel in verse 23. For Paul, assurance and perseverance were two sides of the same coin.

Conclusion

- Stay focused on the hope that Christ offers: new creation, new life.
- Rejoice in the belonging that believers find in the family of God.
- Rejoice in the fact that Christ defeated alienation and rebellion in the heart of every Christ-follower.

Application:

Why is Creation Important?

Genesis 1:1-2, 26-27

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Then God said, “Let us make man[h] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Romans 1:19-23

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

HISTORICAL NATURE OF GENESIS



Genesis – Historical Nature

- Genesis is the foundation of the entire Bible.
- The word “genesis” means beginnings and is the story of the beginning of the universe, the solar system, earth, and human beings.
- Chapters 1-11 in Genesis are quoted more than 100 times in the New Testament.
- All of the first eleven chapters are referred to in the New Testament.
- Every New Testament author refers somewhere to Genesis 1-11.

Genesis – Jesus

- Jesus Himself refers to each one of the first seven chapters of Genesis.
- He refers back to Adam and Eve to explain the biblical view of marriage.
- Jesus affirms the historicity of Cain and Abel in Matthew 23 in which he connects the blood of Abel to Zechariah.
- If the murder of Zechariah at the door of the Temple was historical, then the murder of Abel was also historical.
- Jesus confirms the historicity of Noah and the Flood in Matthew 24:37-39

CHARACTER OF JESUS

THE CREATOR



Jesus the Creator

- We learn about the character of Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount.
- Matthew 5:3 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit”
- Jesus taught that we should be humble and focus on the needs of others.
- That is not the lesson of evolution.
- The focus in evolution is on personal survival and competition.

Jesus the Creator

- Matthew 5:5 - “Blessed are the gentle”
- Jesus taught that we should be mild, patient, and long-suffering.
- This is not the lesson of evolution.
- It is based on the survival of the fittest and the selfish gene.
- Aggression and promiscuity = success.

Jesus the Creator

- Matthew 5:7 - “Blessed are the merciful”
- Jesus taught that we are to have mercy and compassion.
- This is not the lesson of evolution.
- It is based on the struggle for survival is not motivated by mercy.
- Helping others might hinder your own evolutionary success.

Jesus the Creator

- Matthew 5:9 - “Blessed are peacemakers” - Jesus told us to love our enemies.
- This is not the lesson of evolution.
- Often the dominant male kills all the other males in order to assure his evolutionary success.
- No mercy, gentleness, or peacemaking.



GENESIS