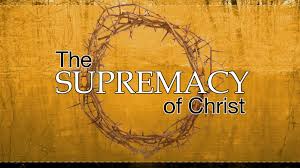
**THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST**

Colossians 1:15-23

Key Verse 18

“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.”

**Introduction**



In Paul’s time, the Colossian church had been infiltrated by different teachings who had their own ideas about the Lord Jesus and his Gospel. Paul could have intended to fight against them one by one. But he did not do that. Rather Paul simply taught the Colossians who Jesus is and what he did. In that way, he made it clear once for all the supremacy of our Lord Jesus. May the Lord help us to know who Jesus is so that we may not distracted from any lucrative idea.

1. Read verses 15-17. How does Paul describe Jesus? (15) What is Jesus’ relationship to all things He created? (16-17)

1-1, Read verses 15-17.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1-2, How does Paul describe Jesus? (15)

***The Son is the image of the invisible God,***

* Jesus is the image of God and the perfect reflection of God. He tells us that there is literally no difference between God nor Jesus, that the two are separate yet one in nature.

Hebrews 1:3 reads,

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

***the firstborn over all creation.***

* It does not mean that Jesus is a first creation of God. Paul did not mean in order but in Supremacy.
* He meant that Jesus is the author and the first of all that exists in all things in heaven and on earth.

John 1:1 reads,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Revelation 1:8 reads,

““I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

* Simply speaking, to call him, "firstborn," means that Jesus is preeminent, he was there first. In all creation, Jesus is first. It is because Jesus is the Eternal God who entered into time and space and became a man.
* As John 1:14 indicates, he dwelled among us and showed himself to be the Image of the Invisible God. He loved us as God loves us. He served us as God serves us. He also sacrificed himself for us as God sacrificed himself for us.
* Jesus who is Supreme over all things came to earth in order to reveal God to us in every way.

1-3, What is Jesus’ relationship to all things He created? (16-17)

***16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.***

* Nothing exists by chance. All things were created in Christ, through Christ and for Christ. All things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible originated from Christ.
* If we try to explain the things that exist without Christ, we are left with only a formless, empty void.
* Apart from Christ, we cannot find the answers to the fundamental questions of existence, such as "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" "Where am I going?"
* But when we know that through Christ all things were made, including ourselves, everything becomes clear. We can find meaning and purpose for our lives.
* All things that exist--in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible--came into being through Christ. This includes throne, power, and authority.
* He is the Word through whom God created all things. All things have been created for Christ. The purpose of all creation is to bring glory to Christ.

***17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.***

* Christ holds everything together and sustains all things by his powerful word (Heb 1:3). Christ is continually involved in creation.
* Jesus said that the Father was always at his work (Jn 5:17). Christ sustains all things. Everything depends on him for existence moment by moment.

2. Read verses 18-20. What is Jesus’ relationship to the church? (18a) In what respect does Jesus have supremacy? (18b) What was God pleased to do in Christ? (19)

2-1, Read verses 18-20.

**18** 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. **19** For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

2-2, What is Jesus’ relationship to the church? (18a)

***18 And he is the head of the body, the church;***

* Paul talks about the relationship between Christ and the church. Here, "the church" does not refer to a building or organization. It is not confined to a local congregation, but refers to the church universal, which includes all believers who confess Jesus as Lord--past, present and future.
* So the church is a living organism. It is imbued with the life of God and is active and dynamic. Moreover, this analogy teaches us the relationship between Christ and the church

Ephesians 1:22-23 reads,

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

* A body and head are inseparable. They have a life relationship. All the directions and orders that govern the body come from the head.
* The head sustains the body. As the body moves according to the guidance of the head, so the church moves according to the guidance of Christ.
* Christ is the Ruler of the church. Usually people think of the church as a place to do good things--like help the needy, or enjoy fellowship, or receive some benefit.
* However, the church is where we have fellowship with Christ and his people, worship Christ, and find Christ's direction and guidance. The church's mission is to reveal Christ and obey his will.

***he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead,***

* This portion of verse 18 explained the reason why Jesus is the head of the church.
* Jesus is the first one to be raised in eternal victory over death. Jesus conquered death and cannot die again.
* Jesus said, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!" (Rev 1:18)
* In this way Jesus became supreme and preeminent as the head of the church. Christ is reigning in every realm.
* Christ is not a dead hero like John F Kennedy or Martin Luther King. Rather he lives and reigns as the Lord.
* Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb 13:8). He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today.

2-3, In what respect does Jesus have supremacy? (18b)

***so that in everything he might have the supremacy.***

* This is the conclusive word about who Jesus is. So far Jesus is described one aspect and another aspect. Overall Jesus has the supremacy in everything!
* It is also to have comfort in our hearts that this world is not abandoned to fate, nor to its own wickedness.
* But that the Lord Jesus is Lord over all and the world is under his Supremacy. He is supreme over all things. He rules the heavens and the earth.
* He rules our lives and the lives of all who will surrender their lives to him in faith. Praise Jesus!

2-4, What was God pleased to do in Christ? (19)

***19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,***

* Christ is the head of the church because he is sufficient. Paul emphasized "all his fullness." This means that Jesus is the final, complete, perfect revelation of God.
* Jesus lacked nothing of God. This refuted the false teaching that Jesus was insufficient or inferior, that something else in addition to Jesus was needed.
* Paul proclaims that Jesus is sufficient for our salvation, for our spiritual growth, and for everything.
* Jesus possesses all of God's divine attributes, such as wisdom, love, holiness, power, Spirit, glory, compassion, righteousness, justice, eternity.
* John 1:16 says, "From the fullness of his grace, we have all received one blessing after another." We can receive fullness through Christ.
* We can be happy and satisfied with Jesus alone. We do not need anything other than Jesus, Christ gives us life to the full (Jn 10:10).
* Jesus said to the thirsty, "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:13-14).
* As a connection to the following verses, God was pleased that although Jesus was himself “the fullness of God”, he still humbled himself to follow the path God had set before him to follow as the Son of Man who would save of the world.

3. Read verses 20-23. What has God done through Jesus’ blood? (20) How does Paul describe our former condition? (21) What is the purpose of reconciliation through Jesus' death? (22) What do we need for his purpose to be fulfilled? (23a) What can we learn from Paul as a servant of the gospel? (23b)

3-1, Read verses 20-23.

**20** 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. **21** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.**22** But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23** if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

3-2, What has God done through Jesus’ blood? (20)

***20 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.***

* Paul specifically mentions the reconciliation of the Colossians. Paul explains what God has done through Christ. He has reconciled all creation to himself.
* When man disobeyed God's command the order of perfect paradise was broken. Since sin entered man's heart, it broke all the relationships between God and human beings, among human beings, and between human beings and creation.
* Sometimes the world seems so broken that it cannot be fixed. Actually, no one can fix it. But God can fix it.
* In order to fix all these broken relationships and the broken world, one thing was needed: blood, which means life-sacrifice.
* God sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ to this world. Jesus gave his life, shedding his blood on the cross. It was not just ordinary blood, but the blood of the sinless Son of God.
* This blood has the power to fix all the broken relationships and the broken world. This is the power of the blood.
* Only the power of Jesus' blood can bring true peace between God and human beings and all creation.
* This power is working in our world now. It will ultimately reconcile all things, in heaven and on earth.

3-3, How does Paul describe our former condition? (21)

***21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.***

* The Colossians and we were also alienated from God and his enemies because of our evil behavior.
* We human beings start out not only as aliens and strangers in our hearts to God, but also as his enemies. Paul tells us that human beings are enemies of God by their evil behavior.

Romans 2:8-9 reads,

“But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil.”

* In other words human beings’ evil behavior is reflected in “self seeking”, in “rejection of the truth” and in “following evil”.
* A selfish, self seeking, and stubborn mind is a mind in enmity with God. We all start out this way, selfish and self seeking, rejecting the Biblical teaching, which makes us evildoers, enemies in our minds of God.

3-4, What is the purpose of reconciliation through Jesus' death? (22)

***22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—***

* But God still wanted to bring his enemies back to himself that the two might be at peace with one another. How did he do so? God did so through his Son Jesus Christ.
* By Christ's death on the cross, we are reconciled to God. The purpose of reconciliation is to be holy in his sight.
* This is amazing for us. At the last day of God's judgment, we can stand before God without blemish and free from accusation.
* We were sinners, full of weakness, mistakes, and blemishes. Sometimes we did something good, but our good behavior could not cover our sins.

3-5, What do we need for his purpose to be fulfilled? (23a)

***23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.***

* We can stand before the judgment seat of Christ when we continue in our faith, holding on to the hope held out in the gospel.
* The blood of Jesus can take away all our transgressions and cleanse us from all our sins. This is the gospel.

3-6, What can we learn from Paul as a servant of the gospel? (23b)

***This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.***

* This gospel is proclaimed to every creature under heaven. Paul had become the servant of this gospel. Like Paul, we also have become the servants of this gospel.

**Conclusion**

In this lesson we have learned who Jesus is. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus is the Creator of creation. Jesus is the Sustainer of all things. Jesus is the Head of the church. Jesus is the Reconciler. Jesus is Supreme over all things and sufficient to meet our needs. In a word, Jesus is everything. We find everything we need in Jesus. We can be satisfied in Jesus alone. Let's come to Jesus, encounter Jesus, and live in Jesus in every area of our lives.

**One word: The Supremacy of Jesus!**