

"The Supremacy of Jesus Christ"

Part 1

Colossians 1:15-20

Introduction: When we stopped last week, we were looking at Paul's prayer for the saints at Colossae. When he ended his prayer, he was focused upon Jesus Christ.

Notice Colossians 1:12-14

This then caused Paul to go right into the heart of his message which is the Supremacy of Jesus Christ. In the verses that we are going to step into Paul will mention seven unique characteristics about Jesus which qualify Him to have the supremacy. Why does Paul teach what we are about to look at? Because of Gnosticism. The Gnostics taught that Jesus was a phantom and that He certainly could not have been God. They believed He was an emanation that had went out from God and acted on His own. This was false teaching and some were starting to listen and to entertain the false teaching. So, Paul teaches why Jesus Christ is to have the supremacy.

He is:

1. The Image of God.

Notice Colossians 1:15a

Many people have a preconceived idea about what God is like. Some picture Him as being angry and judgmental with people all the time. Others see Him as being uncaring with very little concern for what happens here on earth. Some picture Him as being all loving to the point of ignoring the sin of people and just wrapping his arms around all of mankind and taking them all to heaven. Others picture Him as an old man sitting upon a throne with a constant scowl upon His face. Have you ever wondered what God is actually like?

In order to see what God is actually like all we need to do is to look at Jesus Christ. He is the exact image of God.

John 14:8-11

⁸ Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

¹⁰ *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

¹¹ *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.*

Hebrews 1:1-3

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

³ *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:*

When Jesus Christ walked on the earth, to look upon Him was to look upon God. He was fully God. Therefore, we can know what God is like by looking at the life of Jesus. He was loving, compassionate, sympathetic, long-suffering, patient, sacrificial, uncompromising, and steadfast in providing the best for you and me. This is who God is. He is not an angry God but He is a God that loves you and wants to see you forgiven so that He can bless you with all spiritual blessings.

Ephesians 1:3

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

Let me give you another glimpse of what God is like.

John 8:3-7

³ *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,*

⁴ *They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

⁵ *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*

⁶ *This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.*

⁷ *So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

2. The Firstborn of every creature.

Notice Colossians 1:15b.

There are many cults who use this verse in an attempt to destroy the deity of Jesus Christ. They will say that since He was born, He could not have existed in eternity past. The term "firstborn" does not always refer to the time when someone is born but it can refer to POSITION of importance. That is the idea right here that Paul is speaking of. Let me show you with some verses what it means.

Exodus 4:21-22

²¹ *And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.*

²² *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:*

There were other nations before Israel so the term "firstborn" does not refer to being the "first" nation, but here it refers to position and importance. Israel is the "supreme" nation because from them would come the Messiah, to them is promised the Kingdom, and to them is the promise of the second coming.

In the Old Testament the firstborn came with many extras also. The firstborn was to be the spiritual leader of the family. The firstborn would receive a double portion of the father's inheritance. While it did refer to the order of birth at times it carried the idea of a higher position.

That is the idea here in Colossians. When Jesus is called the firstborn of all creatures it means he has the supremacy over all of creation.

Psalm 89:27

²⁷ *Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.*

Let me show you one more verse.

Revelation 1:17

¹⁷ And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

The word "first" here means "absolutely first." That can be viewed in two ways. He existed before all of creation and He is supreme over all of creation.

3. The Creator of the universe.

Notice Colossians 1:16

Our Lord has created everything that exists.

John 1:1-3

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

² The same was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

It was all created by Him and FOR Him. Notice the words of Johnson:

*"Several steps are involved in the construction of a substantial building. First, an architect is obtained to design the building and prepare plans and specifications in accordance with the expressed desires of the owner. Then the plans are submitted for bids by builders or contractors, and a builder secured. After the completion of the edifice, it is occupied by the owner and devoted to its intended use. Our Lord is not only the builder of the universe; He is also its architect and owner. All things have been created **in Him** (the eternal plans for the creation abode in Him), **by Him** (He acted as builder) and **for Him** (the creation belongs to Him and is to reflect His glory)."*

Psalm 19:1-3

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

² Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

³ There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Notice some facts about the universe.

- *Saturn's rings are 500,000 miles in circumference, but only about a foot thick.*

- *The star Antares is 60,000 times larger than our sun. If the sun were the size of a softball, the star Antares would be the size of a house. (Just to put this in perspective you could fit 1.3 million earths inside the sun.)*
- *If the sun were the size of a beachball, and put on top of the Empire State Building, the nearest group of stars would be as far as way as Australia is to the Empire State Building.*
- *A star known as LP 327-186 is a so-called white dwarf. It is smaller than the state of Texas; yet it is so dense that if a cubic inch of it were brought to earth, it would weigh more than 1.5 million tons.*
- *The earth travels around the sun at about eight times the speed of a bullet fired from a gun.*
- *There are more insects in one square mile of rural land than there are human beings on the entire earth.*
- *Bees make their own air conditioning. When the weather gets hot, and threatens to melt the wax in the hive, one group of bees will go to the entrance of the hive, and another will stay inside. They will then flap their wings all together, making a cross draft that pulls the hot air out of the hive, and draws cooler air inside.*
- *A single human chromosome contains twenty billion bits of information. How much information is that? If written in ordinary books, in ordinary language, it would take about four thousand volumes.*

Not only is it all created by Him and for Him but there is more.

Notice Colossians 1:17

Here in this verse, we see two points.

a. He is before all things.

This means that Jesus existed in eternity past. He existed before all of creation which should be obvious because He created all things.

John 1:1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

Notice what Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day.

John 8:54-59

⁵⁴ *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me: of whom ye say, that he is your God:*

⁵⁵ Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

⁵⁷ Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

⁵⁸ Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

⁵⁹ Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

b. He sustains all things.

Notice Colossians 1:17 again.

When Paul tells us that by Him all things consist, he is stating that Jesus Christ holds all things together and causes the entire universe to function in harmony. Physicists scratch their heads today because we live in a world where they have discovered that the atoms and neutrons should cause everything to be blown up in a major nuclear explosion but there is something that holds it all together and this puzzles them. Notice the words of Karl Darrow who is a physicist on this thought:

"You grasp what this implies. It implies that all massive nuclei have no right to be alive at all. Indeed, they should never have been created and, if created, they should have blown up instantly. Yet here they all are... Some inflexible inhibition is holding them relentlessly together. The nature of that inhibition is also a secret... one thus far reserved by nature for herself."

Conclusion:

You and I know what holds it altogether, it is Jesus Christ the Great Sustainer. Why do the scientists and physicists acknowledge this?

1. They would have to admit there is a Creator to whom they would be accountable.
2. They chose to suppress the Truth.

Romans 1:18-22

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,