

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Text: Colossians 1:15-18

INTRODUCTION: Paul moves from the work of the Redeemer to the greatness of the Redeemer. In these verses Paul defines the Person of Christ and claims for Him absolute supremacy. The Phrase in verse 18, "That in all things He might have the preeminence", is the theme of the entire passage.

Some false teachers had stuck their heads into the little church at Colossae and tried to drag Christ from His throne and take from Him some of His glory. Paul writes this passage to show the unspeakable glory and dignity of Christ. It is hard to subject these words to the imperfect outlines and expositions of man.

Who it is that Paul is talking about - Jesus of Nazareth, 30 yrs before died as a criminal.

I. CHRIST IS SUPREME IN REVELATION.

"He is the image of the invisible God."

God is invisible; He cannot and will not be seen. There needs to be then, a medium of representation. The image of God must be Divine as well as visible. Christ is the image of God--a real and perfect likeness--no feature absent, none misplaced, and none impaired in fulness or dimmed in lustre.

1. This is His Character--Divine. The word means "common nature, of the same essence."

2. This is His Work. He is the revealer of God. Jesus is the idea of God and the expression of God. He has interpreted God to men. He is the perfect image, the visible representation of the unseen God. He has a monopoly on revelation.

manifestation of the hidden

He has made the invisible God visible and the unknowable God knowable. We can know God only through Christ. To believe in God is idolatry; to believe in the God revealed in Christ is salvation.

① Paul is speaking of the Son, the author of redemption and forgiveness of sins. It is, therefore, Jesus in His mediatorial person, that the Apostle characterizes as being the image of God. At the cross the invisible God was manifested. He brought God so near us that men saw, heard and handled of the Word of life. He revealed a speaking, acting, weeping, suffering God; He held out an image of God in the love He displayed. His Love--too great to be the love of a created being. His Power--too vast to be lodged in any other than absolute Deity--nature, disease, death.

② He not only reveals God, but also reveals man. Man was created in the "image of God." But sin came in, and man never realized his destiny. But Jesus shows us what men were meant to be.

II. HE IS SUPREME IN CREATION

Verses 15b-17

"The first-born of every creature."

We must be careful to attach the correct meaning to this phrase. In the Bible this phrase has nothing to do with TIME. It is applied to things that are primary and prominent. "First-born of death"--alarming and fatal malady. "First-born of the poor"--a pauper of paupers. Messiah Psalm 89--"I will make Him my first-born"--will invest Him with royal dignity, and clothe Him with pre-eminent splendor.

Its background was in the custom of giving the first-born of a family the place of prominence. He was the heir, he received a double portion. He was the father's representative and acted in his father's name. He was entrusted with the management of the house.

So Christ stands out as the first-born--all transactions are with Him. It is a title of honor and dignity.

John 3:1 b 1. Priority over all creation. His absolute pre-existence. Born is not a term referring to origin, but relationship.

2. Sovereignty over all creation. God's first-born is the natural ruler, the head of God's household. He is the Lord of Creation. why?

Power of Creation
(1) Because He Himself is the Creator. This is the justification of the title given to the Son in the preceding verse. Creation is here fully and absolutely ascribed to Christ

The One who accomplished the Divine work of Redemption is also the One who accomplished the Divine work of Creation. The One redeemed by Christ need have no fears or terrors in this universe; he knows that His redeemer is also Creator and ruler of All.

(2) He is the Purpose of Creation. "and for Him." This marks the destination of the universe. He is not only the beginning but also the ending. All creation passes out from Him and ultimately all creation will come back to him. He is the goal towards which all existence seeks to rise--failing to rise to Christ is failing in purpose.

The world was made for Christ. Creation was created to be His and to give Him glory. Apart from Christ, the universe and all in it loses its meaning.

(3) He is the Perserver of Creation. Verse 17. He maintains in existence what he has created. He makes the world a cosmos instead of a chaos. He sustains it and moves it towards its destiny. All laws by which this world is kept in order are the expression of the mind of Jesus.

Isaiah = "Lord O, creator of the ends of the earth —" is

X crucified

Jeremiah = "true O, living O, everlasting King -" II

is the weeping Jesus — washing disciples feet —
crowned with thorns — nailed to cross

Ezekiel — seated on sapphire throne, with the
rainbow for its canopy, & the cherubim for
its knees & guardians is more other than

He whose garments filled by executioners,
carried arm of Roman soldier.

He by whom all things were made had
not "where to lay his head!"

He is about to create
new religions
Smith, Puchan, Ford
He created them.

[Faint, mostly illegible text from the reverse side of the page, appearing as bleed-through.]

universe, etc - contingent upon X's mercy

His arm upholds the universe. He feeds the sun with fuel, and guides the planets on their journey and keeps them from collision and disorder. Every pulsation of our hearts depends on His Sovereign beneficence who feeds and clothes us.

Here He love amazes us. That the creator and upholder of the universe should come down to such a world as this and die for us is the most amazing of all revelations. The God of the first chapter of Genesis is the babe of the first chapetr of Matthew.

Here is assurance--Surely He who made and sustains all craction is able to keep us from falling.

III. CHRIST IS SUPREME IN ADMINISTRATION.

Verse 18.

1. The Church is the organism through which Christ acts, and which shares all the experiences of Christ. The body is the s servant of the head--moves at the head's bidding and is powerles and lifeless without the head.

Not only does Christ have supremacy over the natural creation, but also over the New Creation.

(1) Christ is inseparable from the Church--identified with it. The Church belongs to Christ.

Ill--Paul, Achan. *that not the same thing*

(2) Here is privilege--It is the privilege of the Church to be the instrument through which Christ works.

(3) Here is a warning--It is possible to make a body unfit and unhealthy. By undisciplined and careless living the Church can unfit herself to be the instrument of Christ.

2. He is the head because He is the beginning.

(1) First in the sense of originating power; the source from which something came. The world is the creation of Christ and the Church is the creation of Christ.

(2) He is the source of its existence and blessings. By His blood.--conviction, pardon, cleansing.

3. Because He is the First-born from among the Dead.

(1) Others were raised, but died again. Christ is raised to die not more. They were proofs of the possibility of resurrection. Christ is the PLEDGE of our resurrection.

(2) He is the PATTERN--"like unto His glorious body.

mail of the wall of our memories

*creation of world = me
a word
create the church
By His Blood*

*the life of the
Body is Blood*

*Head:
gives life "beginning"
sustains life - "resurrection"*

6-11-61 - Valley View Bapt. of Farmers Branch -
Dallas, Texas

The Promised Land of the O.T. is the Kingdom of God of the N.T.

I W 12-14 - O The Father's part - He initiated it

II vs 15 ff - O The Son's part - He accomplished it

1- The Father's Role 1. He qualified believers for an inheritance 2. He rescued them from darkness 3. He transferred us to the Kingdom of His Son

→ Thanksgiving to O for what He has done is the best posture for overcoming or preventing heresy

This is a great emphasis on Grace. He qualified us

1- O qualifies = whatever is required, O provides

2- It is O who qualifies us, not we or anything else.

this is not primarily a reference to heaven, but a present reality

- Grace - the word inheritance: you receive an inheritance as a gift, you don't earn it

- Qualified - Paul uses this 2 Cor 3:5, 6 in this form of here + there

to share (partake) - the part which is assigned to us. Suggests the thought that each individual has a particular place in the corporate destiny

- Both inheritance + ministry require specific character qualities + no one possesses them by himself

→ $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ + $\mu\epsilon\pi\iota\varsigma$ are almost synonyms - perhaps the redundant use indicates that the recipient's salvation is a part of the gift available to more people.

Notes

1- our O is a O who acts

2- this acts should draw seasons praise + thanksgiving to us - Gratitude for God's great acts of salvation -

3- the specific works mentioned here - Paul seeking to ground them in the faith = the Colossian heresy → Thanksgiving to God for what He has done is best posture for overcoming attacks from enemies