

Posted July 9, 2020 Colossians 1:15–20

Read Colossians 1:15–20. I will print the NET–2 translation.

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation,

16 for all things in heaven and on earth were created in him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him.

17 He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him.

18 He is the head of the body, the church, as well as the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself may become first in all things.

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son

20 and through him to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through the blood of his cross—through him, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

COMMENTS:

It is fitting that the title given this section of Colossians is: The Supremacy of Christ. This is a short reading, but since it is considered one of the greatest sections of Colossians and also an important section of the New Testament, I want to give us adequate time to consider this text.

To be able to discuss who Jesus is, you need to study Colossians 1:15–20; Ephesians 1:15–23 and Philippians 2:6–11. These three New Testament selection provide the foundational truths about who Jesus is, where did he come from, and his relationship with Church. Colossians presents Jesus as God more directly than most references do.

Even the Muslims and the Jews consider Jesus a prophet. Being called a prophet is an honor, unless he is God. The division about Jesus is on his twofold nature: true God and true man. Almost every heresy about the Christ begins with a denial of either his deity or humanity.

Vs. 15–20 are a carefully constructed poem. An unanswered question is did Paul compose it or is he simply using something which had been written by someone else. Most commentators view it as early hymn of the church. I believe it was probably written by Paul because he was a theologian as well as a missionary.

V. 15 begin with the statement “He is the image of the invisible God.” How can you have an image of something that is invisible? You look at a picture (icon) so you can recognize the person when you see them. Jesus gives us the picture of God. What is God like? Jesus shows us the character and qualities of our heavenly Father.

If you jump down to v. 19 you read, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son.” As you look at Jesus you can see all of God. We sometimes think a son resembles the father. Here Paul is saying Jesus does not just resembles God, he himself is fully God.

The last half of v. 15 deals with the position Jesus has. He is the “firstborn OVER all creation.” The world (and even some Christians) are confused by the birth of Jesus. That is not when the Son of God came into existence.

He eternally was the Son of God who chose to come as a human being into our world. He would be the sin payment for us. Jesus was not a created being. Instead he was the creator of everything that exists, both visible and invisible (the physical world & beings as well as the spirit beings). This was an attack on the Gnostic heresy which believed physical was bad and spirit was good.

Then to cement this truth it says that everything that exists was created THROUGH him and FOR him. Then in v. 17 we learn the Son of God was BEFORE all things and that he holds all of creation together. The physical is not the evil part of creation. There is evil in both the physical and the spirit world.

His connection to us is that he is the head of his body, the church. He is the beginning of the church thru the resurrection, “the firstborn from the dead,” and is number one (first) in all things.

Through him there is reconciliation (peace produced) both in heaven and on earth through his shed blood on the cross. Jesus not only provided peace between God and humans, he enables us to live at peace with one another.

This poem is a beautiful picture of the Son of God, our Savior. It is an excellent section to memorize so you may know who Jesus is. If you are ever in prison because you are a Christian, these words should help you face that trial in your life. The one we serve is so much greater than anything else, serve him fully.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Part of the false teaching plaguing those early Christians was that Jesus was just one of many deities. We believe he is the one and only deity who with his father and the Holy Spirit are to be honored and served above all. Jesus is never just one among many. He is always the one and only! Keep that in mind always. Why not go back and read again vs. 15–20!