

## Remnant Life Church

November 15, 2015

### Colossians 1 – Part 4

#### “Is Christ Prominent or Preeminent in My Life?”

Colossians 1:15-23

- Pose the Question – “Is Christ prominent...?”
  - Prominent – well known; easily noticed or seen
  - Preeminent – having supreme importance or rank
- Churches today are presenting a wide variety of beliefs in an effort to gather in more people to increase their numbers and income
  - DC main-line denominational church began to present an “adjusted” gospel –
  - It began with focus groups and market research to see what the people wanted – (the first step in a church moving away from God)
    - + ...everyone did what was right in their own eyes... - Judges
  - Decided to deliberately de-emphasize Jesus Christ as the center of focus
  - They had determined that the name of Jesus Christ had become exclusionary (Acts 4:12 - *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved*)
  - Brought in Hindu, Zen, some Bible verses and the music of Willie Nelson
  - Leader said, “We’re enabling people to discover God for themselves, maybe through Jesus, maybe through Buddha, maybe through any number of ways.”
- This speaks to what many churches are preaching today – The Gospel of Practicality
- Rather than dealing with repentance, faith, and a life submitted to God we instead focus on how to be happy, have a good marriage, or live a stress-free life.
- We ask, “What can Jesus do for me?” instead of, “Is my life a reflection of His overwhelming presence in my life?”
- Jesus should not just be added to our lives He must be the center of all we are.
- A true Christian is one who has Jesus as preeminent and not just prominent in their life
- Paul is writing to the church in Colossae to deal with the issue of Jesus being minimized through the teaching of Judaism and the Gnostics
- He addressed three primary points to the false teaching having to do with what they believed
- They were being told -
  1. God did not create the world because all matter is evil having been created by a lesser God who then became satan
  2. Since matter is evil God would not have come to earth in human, bodily form
  3. Because of that Jesus was not God in human form but rather one of many available intermediaries between God and humans
- **READ – Col. 1:15-23**

- Breaks down into 2 sections
  - Verses **15-17** – Jesus is Lord over all creation
  - Verses **18 – 23** – Jesus is Lord over His new creation
  - Second half of verse **18** states the overriding theme, “...so that in everything He might have the supremacy.”
- In verses **15 – 17** Paul gives us 4 truths about Jesus
  1. **He is God** (vs **15a**) – “*is the image of the invisible God.*”
    - Image is a symbol but more than just a representation it is something that strikes a deep feeling as well
      - + My wedding ring
      - + The statue of liberty (110 yrs ago – my grandfather...)
      - + The American flag (the French flag...)
    - These are all symbols of something far greater than themselves but they themselves are not the meaning they are a representation
    - Jesus is more than just a symbol of God – He is God
    - Original Greek – image - eikon (eye-CONE) – likeness or replica
    - In Paul’s day image also meant a die or stamp that would make exact reproductions – i.e. - brick molds
    - In many places in order to travel during that time you would need a passport with an image placed on it that was an exact replica of others but also an eikon that was a distinguishing mark that set you apart from everyone else – an ID card
    - Paul used this word because the people understood that an image of you identified you to everyone else
    - Jesus was and is the image of God – He is God
    - **John 14:9** – “...anyone who has seen me has seen the Father...”
    - **Heb 1:3** – “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being...”
    - **2 Cor 4:4** – “...the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
    - Heard it said that Jesus is God with skin on
  2. **He is the unique Son of God** (vs. **15b**) “...firstborn over all creation.”
    - Jehovah Witnesses believe that this verse tells us that Jesus was a created being just like us and therefore not God
    - In the original language firstborn is about being an heir and a position of honor not birth order alone
    - God speaking of David to inherit His blessing and favor although 8<sup>th</sup> of the sons of Jesse - **Psalms 89:27** - *And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth*
    - Jesus has supreme status as the Son of God
  3. **He is the creator of all things** (vs. **16**)
    - Jesus is the creator not a creation
    - Because He is the creator Paul refutes the teaching that Christ, if God, would only rule over the spiritual world

- The 4 realms Paul designates in vs 16 – thrones, rulers, authorities, and powers encompasses not only what is seen but is what is not seen
  - + These four classifications are also used in **Ephesians 3 and 6** to describe both holy and evil spiritual beings
  - + The Gnostics taught that Jesus was one of many mediators that God sent and that angels should be worshipped
  - + Paul refutes that teaching completely
- 4. **He keeps all things together** (vs. 17)
  - To hold together means to maintain order and prevent chaos from taking over
  - In the midst of the chaos of this sinful world God holds it together for His children
  - We live in a world today that is always on the brink of chaos but many, even in the church, don't understand the power of God to protect us if we would just call on Him
  - 2001 Anthrax attacks to several of the major television news outlets
  - Looking scared and disheveled Dan Rather signed off the second night with "In Cipro we trust" of course taking out God
  - We don't need to be fearful if we call out and surrender our lives to God
- In the second part verses **18-23** tell us that Jesus is also preeminent over His new creation – the Church
  - The body is the church
  - Jesus Christ is the head of that body
  - Without Jesus at the head there is no body, no church
  - The problem at Colossae was that they had lost their focus and connection to Jesus and all kinds of false teachings and beliefs had made their way in – also true today
  - Jesus must be head of the church
  - He is the head of RLC – not me, not the board, no one but Jesus
- Verse **19** – the preeminence of Jesus over all things is given by God the Father
  1. The fullness of God dwells in Jesus
    - + The word dwell means to permanently inhabit; not near, over, or under but within
  2. Dwell also means – "take up residence" – your residence identifies you to others
  3. "All the fullness" – the Gnostics use this term to mean the sum total of all the divine powers and attributes of all creation
    - + Paul uses it 8 different times in Colossians to show that Jesus, and nothing else, is the fullness of God
- NEXT WEEK -
- Verses **20-23** – Paul presents the Gospel message