

Remnant Life Church
November 29, 2015
Colossians 1 – Part 5
“The Mistaken Thinkers”
Colossians 1:18-23

1:18-23 *He is the head of the body, that is, of the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he might be supreme in all things. For in him God in all his fullness was pleased to take up his abode and through him to reconcile all things to Himself, when he had made peace through the blood of his Cross. This was done for all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens. And you, who were once estranged and hostile in your minds, in the midst of evil deeds, he has now reconciled in the body of his flesh, through his death, in order to present you before him consecrated, unblemished, irreproachable, if only you remain grounded and established in the faith, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you have heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, have been made a servant.*

- Paul writes this letter proclaiming the deity and preeminence of Jesus as Savior

REVIEW -

- 4 images of Jesus that Paul gives us in **1:16-17**
 1. He is God (...*the image of the invisible God*)
 2. He is supreme as the Son of God (...*the firstborn over all creation*)
 3. He is the creator of all things (*For by Him all things were created...*)
 4. He keeps order in the universe (...*and in Him all things hold together*)
- Why does Paul make these bold proclamations so early in his letter?
- Paul has written this letter to refute false teaching – in particular the teaching of Gnosticism
 - The followers of that teaching were known as Gnostics
 - That words means basically “intellectual ones”
 - They broke away from Christianity primarily because of its, in their minds, over-simplicity
 - They wanted to turn it into an intellectual philosophy and then blend it with other philosophies of the day
 - The base of their belief was that matter was altogether evil and things of the spirit were altogether good
 - God (spirit) would not have touched evil (matter) so He could not have created the world
 - Instead He created emanations of Himself (progressively descending likenesses) and at each further level of emanation they became more and more ignorant of Him and at the furthest of these actually hostile and evil
 - This, to the Gnostic, led ultimately to the creation of Satan

- It was one of these further emanations, they believed, that created the world accounting for the evil of all matter
- The Gnostics believed and taught that the world, created by one of these distance emanations, was not God's created world but the world of one hostile toward Him
 - + This is why Paul insists in his writings that God did, in fact, create the world (1:16; Eph. 2:10, 3:9; Col. 1:16)
- They believed that Jesus was not unique but instead one of the many emanations
 - + Paul says that Jesus is the supreme firstborn Son of God (1:15, 18; Rom. 8:29)
- They believed that since all matter is evil Jesus could not have had a flesh body but was rather a phantom in human form
 - + Paul writes specifically of Jesus' physical body using the head of the body as the example of who Jesus is (1:22)
- The Gnostics believed that the great task of man was to find his way back to God
 - + That path, however, was barred by these emanations who got progressively more and more evil the closer they were to our world
 - + They believed that it was only through special knowledge that man could progress through the barriers on this life-long journey
 - + They were teaching the young churches that special intellect and the learning of passwords allowed a person to grow closer to God
 - + This knowledge and the passwords could only be obtained through the Gnostic teachings