**Jesus has Reconciled Us**

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**Colossians 1:15-20**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 11, 2021**

**Colossians 1:15-20**

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

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

Saints, many New Testament scholars believe that this section was based on a hymn written before Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians. If this was a hymn, we can assume that it was known to the church at Colosse and to other Christians.

Paul would not have quoted something unknown to them. However, Paul was very capable of writing such poetic lines, as demonstrated in passages such as:

**Romans 8:37-39**

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails…

Saints, these verses are regarded as some of the most important verses in the New Testament establishing the deity of Jesus Christ.Christ is the visible image of the invisible God—the verb is present tense, describing Jesus’ position now and forever

**John 10:30**

I and My Father are one."

**John 10:38**

but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

**John 12:45**

And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

Saints, God as Spirit is invisible and always will be

**1 Timothy 6:16**

who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Saints, God’s Son is his visible expression. He not only reflects God, but, as God, he reveals God to us.

**John 1:18**

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

**John 14:9**

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

**Hebrews 1:1-2**

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Saints, Christ existed before God made anything at all. Thus he is supreme over all creation. He has all the priority and authority of the firstborn prince in a king’s household. He came from heaven, not from the dust of the earth.

**1 Corinthians 15:47**

The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

and Saints, he is Lord of all.

**Romans 9:5**

of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

**Romans 10:12**

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

**Revelation 1:5**

and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood…

Saints, Christ is supreme over all creation, including the spirit world. Paul explained in no uncertain terms that the Colossian believers had to focus on the deity of Jesus Christ (that Jesus is God) or their Christian faith would fall prey to false teaching. To put Jesus any lower is to lose the central truth of Christianity.

**16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.**

Saints, all things were created through Christ.

**John 1:3**

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Saints, just as all the fullness of Deity is in him, so in him are all the creative powers that make him the supreme Lord. Because the false teachers believed that the physical world was evil, they thought that God himself could not have created it.

If Christ were God, they reasoned, he would be in charge only of the spiritual world. But Paul explained that everything in heaven and earth was created by Christ, things we can see and the things we can’t see, the visible and invisible world (physical government and spiritual forces). Christ has no equal and no rival.

Because Christ is the Creator of the world, all powers, whether the spiritual forces the Colossians wished to study or any material force, were under Christ’s final authority.

Paul’s words here refuted the false teaching that Christ was one of many intermediaries and that the angels were to be worshiped. All angelic and celestial powers in heaven and on earth are subject to Christ. He is the Lord of all.

**17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

Saints, Christ existed before everything else began. He is not only the Creator of the world, he is also its Sustainer. By him everything came to be, and by him everything holds together.

In him, everything is held together, protected, and prevented from disintegrating into chaos (see Acts 17:28).

**Acts 17:28**

for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

Saints, because Christ is the Sustainer of all life, nothing in creation is independent from him. In him alone and by his word, we find the unifying principle of all of life (Hebrews 1:2-3).

**Hebrews 1:2-3**

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through 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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high…

Saints, the Colossians, and all believers, are his servants who must daily trust him for protection, care, and sustenance.

**18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.**

Saints, while Colossians 1:15-17 unveiled the Son’s relationship to the “old creation” (the world), this verse describes his relationship to the “new creation”—that is, the church.

The church (meaning the body of believers) existed because Christ was its beginning, its source, its head. Just as the parts of the body function under the direction of the brain, so Christians are to work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ.

Paul repeated that Christ is the first of all who will rise from the dead. He was the first to die and come back to life. He was “first” both in time and rank; there will be many more who will live forever after physical death (1 Corinthians 15:20).

**1 Corinthians 15:20**

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep…

Saints, all who trust in Christ will also defeat death and rise again to live eternally with him. This makes him first in everything.

**1 Thessalonians 4:14**

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus

Jesus’ resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, the reason that the church even exists. Only Christianity has a God who became human, died for his people, and was raised again in power and glory to rule the old creation and the new creation (the church) forever.

The Resurrection assures believers that Christ is not a legend; he is alive and ruling his Kingdom. Because Christ is spiritually supreme in the universe, surely we should give him first place in all our thoughts and activities.

**19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.**

Saints, the little word for explains why Christ will have first place in everything. God wanted his fullness (meaning “completeness” or “totality”) to live (meaning “live permanently”) in Christ.

Paul wanted to explain to the Colossians that Christ is God’s dwelling place; therefore, Christ is divine, sovereign, and preeminent. Christ perfectly displays all the attributes and activities of God: Spirit, Word, wisdom, glory.

By this statement, Paul was refuting the Greek idea that Jesus could not be human and divine at the same time. Christ is fully human; he is also fully divine. Nor is there more than one God; this one God, in all his fullness, resides in Christ.

Christ has always been God and always will be God. All of God (including his attributes, characteristics, nature, and being) indwells the Son. When we have Christ we have all of God in human form. Any teaching that diminishes any aspect of Christ—either his humanity or his divinity—is false teaching.

God’s fullness dwells in Christ and in that fullness he reconciled everything to himself. This reconciliation was accomplished through Christ’s blood on the cross. “Reconciliation” means reestablishing a relationship, causing a relationship to become friendly and peaceable when it had not been so. Because Christ is Creator and Sustainer of everything, his death on the cross provided reconciliation for everything.

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**

18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

But what did Paul mean by “everything”?

First, consider what this reconciliation means for humanity. There can be no peace between sinful humans and a holy God. Because people are born into sin, they cannot become good enough to be acceptable to God.

In Old Testament times, God accepted symbolic offerings. Jesus had not yet been sacrificed, so God accepted the life of an animal in place of the life of the sinner.

When Jesus came, he substituted his perfect life for our sinful lives, taking the penalty for sin that we deserve. The penalty for sin is death. We are guilty and culpable, but Jesus took the punishment. Thus, he redeemed us from the power of sin and reconciled us to God.

Second, does this reconciliation of “everything” mean that everyone will be saved?

From other passages, we know that Paul understood salvation to be something accepted or rejected by humans, who are given the choice (for example, see 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10).

**2 Thessalonians 1:5-10**

5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

Saints, the scope of God’s reconciliation is universal—it is offered to all people. But reconciliation is accomplished only for those who accept Christ as Savior.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-18**

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation…

Third, what does this reconciliation mean for “everything” (besides humans)? Just as all of creation fell when Adam sinned, so all of creation will be reconciled. Sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which God created it.

Thus, the world is subject to decay so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day, all creation will be liberated and transformed.

**Romans 8:19-21**

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Saints, in addition, Paul’s reference to things in heaven and on earth was meant to be another blow to the false teachers. Nothing in the universe escapes Christ’s reach.

There is no neutral ground; everything falls under his power. No alien force of darkness can undermine his work or his church. Satan and demons will not be reconciled to God; instead, their end is certain (see Revelation 20:7-10).

**Revelation 20:7-10**

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**