

Message #5

Colossians 1:15-19

Every December, many people around the world celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. Most people know some of the facts surrounding the birth and most can sing the carols by memory. But the sad reality of this is that very few actually grasp who He actually is and what He actually came to this earth to do.

The Apostle Paul had been a man who at one time tried to destroy anyone who believed in Jesus Christ. There were those who were saying that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world who had been raised from the dead and Paul was out to stop those who believed that. But then, Jesus Christ stopped him on a road to Damascus and then He Personally met with Paul for three years instructing him in the grace of God.

So Paul wanted the Colossians to know exactly who Jesus Christ is and what he says there is this:

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, IS FULLY GOD AND ALL CREATION NEEDS TO HONOR HIM AS FULLY GOD BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT PLEASES GOD THE FATHER.

Any religion that does not present Jesus Christ as fully the exalted God is false religion.
Any teaching that does not present Jesus Christ as fully the exalted God is false teaching.

In the first verse of Colossians, Paul said I am an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. He was fully authorized by Jesus Christ to teach the truth about Christ. This is one of the greatest passages concerning the Person of Jesus Christ and the Deity of Jesus Christ in all of the New Testament.

Keep context in mind. Paul had just prayed that these believers would grow deep in their knowledge, wisdom and understanding so they could live life in a worthy way and do God's will in every context. **Growing deep starts with knowing accurate truth about Jesus Christ.**

There are a series of eight specific facts that Paul wanted the believers to know:

FACT #1 – Jesus Christ is the physical image of the invisible God. **1:15a**

Whatever Jesus Christ physically did and said that people could see was an exact presentation of God the Father whom you cannot see.

This is one potent statement. The word “image” (eikwn) is one that presents two ideas:

- 1) Exact representation.
- 2) Exact manifestation.

Now the verb “is” is present tense. So what this means is that Jesus Christ is continually the exact representation and exact manifestation of the invisible God.

So if you want to know what God would look like in human form, Jesus Christ is it.

Now an image is something that allows us to visualize something in a knowable and concrete way. The types of images may be exact or inexact.

In an exact image it is identical.

In an inexact image it is accurate but not identical - picture, portrait, painting, sculpture.

For example, a photograph or picture is an inexact image. It is a picture of something but it is not exact because it lacks life.

On the other hand, an exact image is exactly the same in every way.

Now God the Father is a Spirit and is invisible. In fact, no man has seen God the Father (John 1:18; Ex. 33:20). In order for a Person to be an exact image and exact representation and manifestation of the invisible God, He must become visible and must be as perfect, and as Holy and as powerful as God. He must have all the Divine attributes of God.

The statement being made here is that Jesus Christ is the full and exact representation of God. When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30) and “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

FACT #2 – Jesus Christ is the firstborn of all creation. 1:15b-16

There are those who read this and conclude Jesus Christ was the first person created. But when you look at the grammar and context, that interpretation is impossible. Those who suggest this are either exegetically ignorant or satanically arrogant.

The phrase “firstborn of all creation” means Jesus Christ gave birth to everything created and sits in a unique relationship with God the Father as Creator of all things and as heir of all things.

The “for” that begins **verse 16** explains what it means that He is the firstborn of all creation. All things were created “by” Him and all things were created “through” Him. In other words, **Jesus Christ is fully God and He is the Creator who gave birth to everything that is created.**

Remember, Paul is praying that believers will have deep knowledge and wisdom and understanding of the things of God so that we may walk worthy of a relationship with God. No one can walk worthy if one demeans or diminishes the truth about Jesus Christ.

In **verse 16** there are three prepositions that are used to describe Christ's creation work: "by" (en), "through" (dia), "for" (eis).

Now we need to grasp these prepositions because these are critical to the Person and work of Jesus Christ:

- 1) The prepositional "by Him" means everything in creation was conceived and designed in Him and by Him.
- 2) The prepositional "through Him" means the actual construction process was designed and built by and through Jesus Christ.
- 3) The prepositional "for Him" means everything was designed and built for His purposes.

Now to establish how much of creation Jesus Christ gave birth to, Paul gives a list of eight specific things that Jesus Christ created:

(Christological Creation Work #1) - Jesus Christ created everything in the heavens. **1:16a**

Notice the plural noun "heavens" which refers to our atmosphere, the stellar heaven and the Throne of God heaven. So anything and everything that has been created in the heavens has been designed and created by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ created the heavens that you can look into the sky and see right now.

(Christological Creation Work #2) - Jesus Christ created everything on the earth. **1:16b**

Things that have been created on this earth have been created by Jesus Christ, who is God. The oceans, the mountains, the fresh water, the birds, the animals and, of course, humans. The light and the darkness were all created by Jesus Christ.

(Christological Creation Work #3) - Jesus Christ created everything visible. **1:16c**

Just this past week there was a unique display of the power of God in an eclipse. They were televising it. Not one commentator said, "Do you realize what you are seeing?" A visible display of the power of Jesus Christ. In fact, during the Great Tribulation, He is going to darken the world with displays just like the one we are looking at right now.

(Christological Creation Work #4) - Jesus Christ created everything invisible. **1:16d**

Why would he bring up Christ created invisible things when we can't see them? Because they are very real and He created them. Just because we can't see them doesn't mean they aren't there.

There is a real world of angels. We know there are church angels, territorial angels, judgment angels and personal angels. There is a real world of heaven which we cannot right now see and hell which we cannot right now see. Jesus Christ designed and created it all.

(Christological Creation Work #5) - Jesus Christ created all thrones. 1:16e

The noun “thrones” is plural and anarthrous (no article). So what this means is that the character and quality of those places of sovereign power and authority has been created by Him.

(Christological Creation Work #6) - Jesus Christ created all dominions. 1:16f

The noun “dominions” is plural and anarthrous (no article). What this means is that the character and quality of all places of authority and power exist because they have been created by Him.

(Christological Creation Work #7) - Jesus Christ created all rulers. 1:16g

All those who sit in key leadership and government positions of authority have been given their position by Him.

(Christological Creation Work #8) - Jesus Christ created all authorities. 1:16h

In any context, those who have governing management positions have been given them by Jesus Christ.

In fact, this very word (exousiai) was used by Jesus Christ to Pilate. Pilate said to Jesus, “Don’t you know that I have authority to release You or crucify You?” Jesus said, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:10-11).

FACT #3 – Jesus Christ is before all things. 1:17a

The preposition “before” (pro) means that Jesus Christ existed before anything else existed. The original text stresses that He Himself and no other existed before all other things ever came into existence.

FACT #4 – Jesus Christ holds all things together. 1:17b

What this means is that Jesus Christ is the One who literally holds everything together. He is the sustainer of all things. Every heartbeat, every breath, every atom, all of gravity, laws of physics, everything is held together by Jesus Christ.

FACT #5 – Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the Church. 1:18a

Jesus Christ is the exalted head of every church. Any church that is a true church will be very serious about the word of God. Now the Church is the body of Jesus Christ so when the Church is Raptured, the entire body will be raptured.

FACT #6 – Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead. **1:18b**

Paul initially did not believe Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, but now he was proclaiming it.

What this means is that Jesus Christ was the first to die and be raised to everlasting life. There were some, such as Lazarus, who were raised from the dead, but he had to die again. Jesus Christ was the first to be raised with a body that would never die again.

FACT #7 – Jesus Christ will eventually have first place in everything. **1:18c**

The “so that” introduces a purpose or reason statement. The reason why Jesus Christ is entitled to have first place and be preeminent in everything is because He is God.

Eventually, He will be fully seen as God and fully worshipped as God. Jesus Christ will eventually have first place in everything.

FACT #8 – God the Father found pleasure to reveal His fullness through Him. **1:19**

This understanding of Jesus Christ and who He is pleases God the Father.

Sometimes parents are criticized as living vicariously through their children. For example, if a son or daughter or grandson or granddaughter excels in some sport or in some other area, the parent or grandparent connects and lives through them and finds great pleasure in what they are doing.

Just imagine being God the Father and you are literally living vicariously through your only Son. He found great pleasure in having His Son exist on earth as fully God in a full manifestation of Himself.

It pleases God the Father when God the Son is viewed this way.

Now carefully understand this point – Jesus Christ is fully God and He will Personally come into your life and save you from all of your sins and then empower and enable you to accomplish God’s will.