

Monday 2/21

Colossians 1:1-2

1 ¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the ²will of God, and Timothy the brother,

2 To the ¹saints in Colossae and faithful brothers in Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Related Verses**Ephesians 1:1**

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

John 1:16-17

16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

John 17:16-17

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

2 Timothy 1:9

9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages

Ephesians 1:2

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 20:17

17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

Portions from the footnotes**Col. 1:1¹ Paul**

The background of this book is that culture had been mixed into the church life in Colossae. Originally, Christ was the unique element in the church life, yet at that time a disturbance was created because Christ was being

replaced by culture. The constituent of the church should be Christ and Christ alone, yet the church had been invaded by certain elements of culture — especially religion, in the form of asceticism related to Judaic ordinances and observances (2:16, 20-21), and philosophy, in the form of mysticism related to Gnosticism and the worship of angels (2:8, 18). Hence, the central concept of this book is that nothing should be allowed to replace Christ.

This book concentrates on Christ as the Head of the Body. It reveals the profoundness, all-inclusiveness, and unlimitedness of Christ to a fuller extent than any other book in the Bible.

Col. 1:1² will

Paul was made an apostle of Christ not by man but through the will of God, according to God's economy. This standing gave him authority to put forth in this Epistle the revelation of God's eternal purpose concerning the church. The is built on this revelation (Eph. 2:20). (Note Eph. 1:1²)

Col. 1:2¹ saints

I.e., the holy ones, those separated and sanctified unto God. They were living in Colossae, but they were separated from the world.

Portions from the Life-study messages

The main point in...Colossians is the fact that in the eyes of God nothing counts except Christ. This fact excludes both good things and bad things, both sinful things and cultured things. In particular, it eliminates all the good aspects of culture....The enemy of God utilizes culture to replace Christ. This is offensive to God. If Satan cannot corrupt us with evil things, God knows that he will try to use the good aspects of culture to replace Christ.

Do not think that this phenomenon was limited to the first century. It is still with us today. In today's Christianity Christ has been almost altogether replaced by other things, especially by good things. The name of Christ may be found in Christianity, but the reality of Christ may be absent. Many things have become substitutes for Christ...[Also], we in the Lord's recovery may substitute the good aspects of our character or

behavior for Christ....Everyone realizes that nothing sinful can be related to Christ. But not many can discern the difference between good character or behavior and Christ Himself. On the contrary, many identify excellent behavior with Christ. Hence, if we are short of revelation, our good character may become a substitute for Christ.

This book was written for us, not only for the saints at Colossae. If we have a clear understanding of the background of this epistle, we shall realize that the only way for us to take is the way of the cross. The cross is both a narrow way and a highway. For those not willing to take the cross, the cross is a narrow way. But for those who are willing to take this way, the cross becomes a highway. In the church we all should be nothing and nobody. This was Paul's attitude when he said that we have died and have been buried. To lay hold of this, we need revelation. Whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do can become a substitute for Christ. The better we are or the more capable we are of doing things, the more Christ may be replaced in our experience. Through the cross, we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing. Otherwise, what we are, what we have, or what we can do will become a substitute for Christ. Then in our Christian life Christ will not be all in all. The book of Colossians teaches us that in the church life Christ must be all and in all. Everything that is not Christ must go. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 6, 3-4, 6-7)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 13 – Sections: Enjoying God As Food By Reading The Word; Reading The Word Being One Way To Enjoy God

Tuesday 2/22

Colossians 1:3-8

3 We give thanks to God, the ¹Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always concerning you,

4 Because we have heard of your ¹faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have unto all the saints

5 Because of the ¹hope ²laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the word of the ³truth of the gospel,

6 Which has come to you, even as it is also in all the world, bearing fruit and growing, as also in you, since the day you heard and knew the ¹grace of God in ²truth;

7 Even as you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful ¹minister of Christ on your behalf,

8 Who also has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Related Verses

1 John 3:14

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.

1 John 4:16

16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

1 John 4:19

19 We love because He first loved us.

Ephesians 6:24

24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

Portions from the footnotes

Col. 1:3¹ Father

God is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, and God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

as the Son of God. According to the Lord’s humanity, God is His God, and according to the Lord’s divinity, God is His Father. (Note 3² in Eph. 1.)

Col. 1:4¹ faith

To have faith is to substantiate and receive what is in Christ, to love is to experience and enjoy what we have received of Christ, and to hope (v. 5) is to expect and wait for the glorification in Christ.

Col. 1:5¹ hope

Hope, faith, and love, mentioned in vv. 4 and 5, are the three things that the apostle stressed in 1 Cor. 13:13. The emphasis there was on love because of the Corinthians’ situation; the emphasis here is on hope, which, strictly speaking, is Christ Himself (v. 27), that Christ may be revealed as everything to us.

Col. 1:5² laid

It is by living and experiencing Christ that we lay up hope in the heavens. The more we live and experience Christ, the more we lay up hope in the heavens. Hence, hope is being laid up now in our daily life.

Col. 1:5³ truth

The truth of the gospel is the reality, the real facts, not the doctrine, of the gospel. “The word” may be considered the doctrine of the gospel, but “the truth” must refer to reality. Christ, in His all-inclusive person and His multifaceted redemptive work, is the reality of the gospel.

Col. 1:6¹ grace

The grace of God is what God is to us and what God gives to us in Christ (John 1:17; 1 Cor. 15:10).

Col. 1:6² truth

Truth here means reality (see point 8 of note 6⁶ in 1 John 1). To know the grace of God in truth is to know it experientially in its reality, not just mentally in vain words or doctrines.

Col. 1:7¹ minister

A minister of Christ is not only a servant of Christ, one who serves Christ, but a serving one who serves others with Christ by ministering Christ to them.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Hope, faith, and love in verses 4 and 5 are the three things which the apostle stressed in 1 Corinthians 13:13. The emphasis there was on love because of the Corinthian situation. The emphasis here is on hope, which, strictly speaking, is Christ Himself (v. 27), for the revelation of Christ as everything to us.

Faith is to realize [to substantiate] and receive what is in Christ, love is to experience and enjoy what we have received of Christ, and hope is to expect and wait for the glorification in Christ. Every genuine Christian has faith in the Lord Jesus and love toward all the saints. These two things prove that we are real Christians.

The reason we can love those whom we could never love naturally is that hope is being laid up for us in the heavens.... This matter...is actually very subjective. It has very much to do with our daily living,...with how we live today. The more we love the saints,...the more we live Christ now, the more hope will be laid up for us in the heavens for our glorification. However, if day by day we do not live Christ, Christ will be there in the heavens, but He will not be laid up as a glory for us....The amount of hope that is being laid up for us in the heavens depends on how much we are living Christ. We need to be those who love the saints without partiality because of the One who is our hope. Such a living is the laying up for ourselves of hope in the heavens.

[In verse 6] the love for the saints is the fruit borne by the gospel. When the gospel is preached in reality, it bears fruit. In those who receive it, it produces love for all believers. The church in Colossae was composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Humanly speaking, the Jews and the Gentiles despised and hated each other. But after the Colossians had believed in the Lord Jesus, the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers came to love one another. Although such a love is a human impossibility, it is a fruit of the gospel. This gospel which grows and bears fruit is also Christ Himself. It was Christ who was growing in the Colossians from the day they first heard the word of the truth of the gospel. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 11-12, 13-14, 16-17)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 13 – Sections: Our Person Determining The Way We Read

Wednesday 2/23**Colossians 1:9-11**

9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of ¹His will in all ²spiritual wisdom and understanding,

10 To ¹walk worthily of the Lord to please Him ²in all things, ³bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full ⁴knowledge of God,

11 Being empowered with all ¹power, according to the ²might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy,

*Related Verses***Ephesians 1:5**

5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Ephesians 1:16-18

16 Do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Philippians 3:10-11

10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

Matthew 7:21

21 Not every one who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matthew 12:50

50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.

Portions from the footnotes

Col. 1:9¹ His

Here God's will is His will regarding His eternal purpose, regarding His economy concerning Christ (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11), not His will regarding minor things.

Col. 1:9² spiritual

Spiritual wisdom and understanding are of the Spirit of God in our spirit, in contrast to Gnostic philosophy, which is merely in the darkened human mind. Wisdom is in our spirit and is for us to perceive God's eternal will; spiritual understanding is in our mind, renewed by the Spirit, and is for us to understand and interpret what we perceive in our spirit.

Col. 1:10¹ walk

Walking worthily of the Lord issues from having the full knowledge of God's will. Such a worthy walk is a walk in which we live Christ.

Col. 1:10² in

I.e., in all ways.

Col. 1:10³ bearing

Here bearing fruit refers to living Christ, growing Christ, expressing Christ, and propagating Christ in every respect. This is the real essence of every Christian good work.

Col. 1:10⁴ knowledge

Not knowledge in letters in the mind but the living knowledge of God in spirit, by means of which we grow in life.

Col. 1:11¹ power

This power is not only the power of Christ's resurrection (Phil. 3:10) but Christ Himself as a dynamo that empowers us in all things (Phil. 4:13) unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy that we may have a living in which we experience and live Christ.

Col. 1:11² might

The might that expresses God's glory, glorifying God in His might.

Portions from the Life-study messages

God's will [in verse 9] refers to the will of His eternal purpose, of His economy concerning Christ (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11), not His will in minor things.

The will of God for us is that we know the all-inclusive Christ, experience Him, and live Him as our

life. To know Christ in this way is to have the full knowledge of God's will.

To know and experience the all-inclusive Christ requires all spiritual wisdom and understanding. The words "all" and "spiritual" modify both wisdom and understanding. Spiritual wisdom and understanding are of the Spirit of God in our spirit in contrast to Gnostic philosophy, which is merely in the darkened human mind. Wisdom is in our spirit to perceive God's eternal will; spiritual understanding is in our mind, renewed by the Spirit, to understand and interpret what we perceive in our spirit.

The will of God is profound in relation to our knowing, experiencing, and living the all-inclusive Christ. In verse 9 Paul was not praying that the Colossians would know whom to marry, where to live, or what kind of job they should have. His heart was not occupied with such trivial things. In this verse God's will refers to Christ. It was not God's will for the Colossians to follow Judaistic observances, Gentile ordinances, or human philosophies. Furthermore, it was not God's will for them to practice asceticism, to treat the body severely in order to bridle the indulgence of the flesh. God's will for the Colossians was to know Christ, to experience Christ, to enjoy Christ, to live Christ, and to have Christ become their life and their person. God's will for us today is exactly the same.

In verse 10...walking worthily of the Lord results from the full knowledge of God's will. If we know that God's will is for us to be saturated with Christ, to take Christ as our life and our person, and to live Christ, spontaneously our walk will be worthy of the Lord. Some think that to walk worthily of the Lord is to be humble, nice, and generous. However, a worthy walk is a walk in which we live Christ. We can be humble, nice and generous without living by Christ. Only by living out Christ can we walk worthily of the Lord. Christ is the will of God, and He should also be our walk. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 19-20, 21)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 13 – Sections: The Bible Being God's Food For Us; The Lord Jesus Being Food to Man through His Word

Thursday 2/24

Colossians 1:12-13

12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has ¹qualified you for a share of the ²allotted portion of the saints in the ³light;

13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Related Verses

Acts 20:32

32 And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.

1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Ephesians 1:18

18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

1 John 1:7

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

2 Corinthians 3:18

18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

Psalms 89:15

15 Blessed are the people who know the joyful shout; They walk, O Jehovah, in the light of Your countenance.

John 1:4

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Galatians 6:15

15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.

Portions from the footnotes

Col. 1:12¹ qualified

God the Father has qualified us by the redemption of God the Son and through the sanctification of God the Spirit for a share of the all-inclusive Christ, the very embodiment of the processed Triune God, as the allotted portion of the saints.

Col. 1:12² allotted

This refers to the lot of the inheritance, as illustrated by the allotment of the good land of Canaan given to the children of Israel for their inheritance (Josh. 14:1). The New Testament believers' inheritance, their allotted portion, is not a physical land; it is the all-inclusive Christ. He is the allotted portion of the saints as their divine inheritance for their enjoyment.

Col. 1:12³ light

Light here is in contrast to darkness in the next verse. When we were under Satan's authority, we were in darkness. But now we are in the kingdom of the Son of God's love, enjoying Him in light.

Portions from the Life-study messages

In Genesis 12 the blessing God promised to give Abraham was the land. In Galatians 3:14 Paul links the blessing of Abraham to the promise of the Spirit. This indicates that the promise of Abraham, the promise of the good land, is the Spirit. Hence, the Spirit is the good land.

Christ is our portion, our lot, our everything, just as the land was all things to the children of Israel. The land provided whatever the children of Israel needed: milk, honey, water, cattle, grain, minerals. In writing this epistle, Paul employed the concept of the all-inclusive land in order to charge the misled Colossians not to take anything other than Christ Himself. Anything that is not Christ is related to the authority of darkness, and we should not accept it. Rather, we should simply remain in the good land and not allow any foreign element to come in. Christ alone is our portion, and we should accept only what is of Him.... The Father has qualified us not to inherit some heavenly mansion, but to have a share in Christ as the all-inclusive portion of the saints. We can boldly declare that Christ is our all-inclusive portion.

Colossians 1:12 indicates that we partake of Christ as the portion of the saints in the light....The only way to partake of Christ and to enjoy Him is in the light. God and Christ are light. When we turn to the Lord and come into His presence, we are in the light and spontaneously begin to enjoy Him as our portion.

Light is the presence of God. If we would be in light, we must turn to Him from within. Then His presence will become the shining light. In this way Christ becomes the portion of the saints in a practical way. [Furthermore], if we would fellowship with God, we must walk in the light (1 John 1:7). In many things we may be able to pretend, but in this matter of enjoying Christ in the light there is no room for pretense. You may deceive others, but you cannot deceive the Lord. He is too real, genuine, honest, and practical.

We need to have more and more contact with the Lord. We need to read His Word with an unveiled face and an open heart. As we fellowship with the Lord and follow the inner anointing, we shall experience Him as the life within us in a practical way. This life is the light. If we follow the inner anointing, we shall be in light. We are also brought into the light by fellowshiping with others in a genuine way. In fellowship there is the shining of light. Moreover, we need to be in the church life and attend the meetings, for in the church and in the meetings we are in the light. In the meetings of the church we often have the sense deep within that we are in the light enjoying Christ as our portion. All these are means by which we may be in the light to enjoy Christ as the portion of the saints. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 49, 23-24, 58-59, 60, 61)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 13 –

Sections: Reading the Word Being to Receive the Lord's Word as Food; Reading the Word with an Attitude of Eating and Drinking God

Friday 2/25

Colossians 1:12-14

12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

13 Who ¹delivered us out of the authority of ²darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the ³Son of His love,

14 In whom we have ¹redemption, the ²forgiveness of sins;

*Related Verses***Matthew 11:28-30**

28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Galatians 5:1

1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not be entangled with a yoke of slavery again.

Romans 7:6

6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.

Romans 8:2

2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

1 John 5:3

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

2 Peter 3:17

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, be on your guard lest being carried away by the error of the lawless, you fall from your own steadfastness.

Ephesians 4:18

18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

*Portions from the footnotes***Col. 1:13¹ delivered**

For Christ to be the Head of the Body, and for us, His believers, to be the members of His Body, God needed to deliver us out of the authority of darkness, the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26b), and transfer us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. This is to qualify us to partake of the all-inclusive Christ as our allotted portion.

Col. 1:13² darkness

Lit., the darkness.

Col. 1:13³ Son

The Son is the expression of the Father as the source of life (John 1:4, 18; 1 John 1:2). The beloved Son as the object of the Father's love becomes to us the embodiment of life in the divine love.

Col. 1:14¹ redemption

Deliverance, mentioned in the preceding verse, deals with Satan's authority over us by destroying his evil power, whereas redemption, mentioned in this verse, deals with our sins by fulfilling God's righteous requirement.

Col. 1:14² forgiveness

The forgiveness of sins is the redemption that we have in Christ. Christ's death accomplished redemption unto the forgiveness of our sins.

Portions from the Life-study messages

As Paul was composing 1:12 he had in mind the type of the land of Canaan.... [Verse 13] reminds us of the way the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt and transferred into the good land.... God the Father has done the same thing with us. He has delivered us out of the authority of darkness, typified by Pharaoh and Egypt, and has transferred us into the all-inclusive Christ, typified by the good land. Just as the children of Israel were transferred out of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey, a land where there was no tyranny, so we have been transferred into a marvelous realm, called the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love. Therefore, to be qualified for a share of the portion of the saints is actually to enter into the good land. Paul's composition

of 1:12 and 13 is thus according to the picture in the Old Testament.

Now we can understand why after Paul speaks of light in Colossians 1:12, he goes on in the next verse to speak of the authority of darkness. It seems as if Paul was telling the Colossians, "You have been delivered out of the authority of darkness. But now you have gone back into darkness. You have lost the very light into which you had been transferred."... The Colossians were carried off as a prey, just as the children of Israel were carried away from the good land into Babylon. In a sense, many Christians today have been carried away from the kingdom of the Son of God's love, away from the realm of light, the sphere of light. As a result, they have lost the enjoyment of Christ as the portion of the saints.

The mistake the Colossians were making was that of receiving and following something other than Christ. To accept something in place of Christ is not only to be in darkness, but also to be under the controlling authority of darkness....At Colossae, the authority of darkness was Jewish religious observances, pagan ordinances, philosophy, mysticism, and asceticism....In Colossians the authority of darkness refers to the good aspects of culture and of our character, disposition, and natural being....God has delivered us out of all this and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, where we live under a heavenly rule and restriction. In this kingdom we are not under a harsh rule, but under the loving rule of the Son. Here we do not sense that we are under righteousness, power, or authority, but under the loving and lovable Lord Jesus. The more we tell the Lord Jesus that we love Him, the more we are freed on the one hand, and the more we are restricted and ruled on the other hand. Because we love Him, we desire to take Him as our person and as our life. This is the proper Christian life for the church life. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 51, 61-62, 41, 35-36)

Corporate Reading of "How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God" Chapter 13 – Sections: Not Studying but Eating and Drinking

Saturday 2/26**Colossians 1:15-18**

15 Who is the ¹image of the invisible God, the ²Firstborn of all creation,

16 Because ¹in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether ²thrones or ³lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created ⁴through Him and ⁵unto Him.

17 And He is ¹before all things, and all things ²cohere in Him;

18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the ¹Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Related Verses**1 Corinthians 15:20-22**

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For since through man came death, through man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

John 12:23-24

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

Romans 8:29

29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

Ephesians 4:15

15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Portions from the footnotes**Col. 1:15¹ image**

God is invisible. But the Son of His love, who is the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance (Heb. 1:3), is His image, expressing what He is. The image here is not a physical form but an expression of God's being in all His attributes and virtues (see note ⁶ in Phil. 2). This interpretation is confirmed by 3:10 and 2 Cor. 3:18.

Col. 1:15² Firstborn

Christ as God is the Creator. However, as man, sharing the created blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14a), He is part of the creation. Firstborn of all creation refers to Christ's preeminence in all creation, because from this verse through v. 18 the apostle stresses the first place that Christ has in all things.

Col. 1:16¹ in

In Him here means in the power of Christ's person. All things were created in the power of what Christ is. All creation bears the characteristics of Christ's intrinsic power.

Col. 1:16² thrones

Thrones refers to those who are in authority on the throne.

Col. 1:16³ lordships

Rule refers to the highest office, *authority* to every kind of official power (Matt. 8:9), *power* to the mere might of authority, and *lordship* to the preeminence that power establishes. Subsequently, we see that what is listed here includes not only the angelic, heavenly authorities, whether good or evil, but also the human, earthly ones. The ascended Christ was seated by the great power of God far above all rule, authority, power, and lordship in the universe. (Note 21¹ in Eph. 1.)

Col. 1:16⁴ through

Through Him indicates that Christ is the active instrument through which the creation of all things was accomplished in sequence.

Col. 1:16⁵ unto

Or, for Him. This indicates that Christ is the end of all creation. All things were created unto Him for His possession. In, through, and unto indicate that creation is subjectively related to Christ. The creation was created in Him, through Him, and unto Him.

Col. 1:17¹ before

This indicates Christ's eternal preexistence.

Col. 1:17² cohere

Or, subsist together in Him. To cohere in Christ is to exist together by Christ as the holding center, just as the spokes of a wheel are held together by the hub at their center.

Col. 1:18¹ Firstborn

Verses 15-17 unveil Christ as the first in creation, as the One who has preeminence among all creatures. Verse 18 shows that Christ is the first in resurrection as the Head of the Body. As such, He has the first place in the church, God's new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

Portions from the Life-study messages

Some insist that Christ is only the Creator, not a creature. But the Bible reveals that Christ is both the Creator and a creature, for He is both God and man. As God, Christ is the Creator, but as man, He is a creature....Those who oppose this teaching are short of knowledge. Actually, they are heretical, because they do not believe that Christ truly became a man. Rather, they believe only that He is God, and such a belief is heresy. Our Christ is God, has always been God, and always will be God. But through incarnation He became a man. Otherwise He could not have been arrested, tried, and crucified; and He could not have shed His blood on the cross for our sins. Praise the Lord for the truth that our Christ is both God and man!

As God, Christ is eternal and did not need to be born. But in 1:15 He is called the Firstborn of all creation. Anything that requires birth must be a creature, part of creation. If Christ were only God and not man, He could not have been born, for God is infinite and eternal, without beginning or ending. But as a man, Christ had to be born. Hallelujah, Christ was born as a man! Isaiah 9:6 says, "For a child is born to us, ...and His name will be

called...Mighty God, Eternal Father...." As the child born to us, Christ is called the mighty God....As the mighty God and the eternal Father, Christ is eternal. But as the child,... He had to be born....According to the Bible, birth is the carrying out of creation. Therefore, to be born is to be created.

The book of Colossians reveals that Christ is preeminent, that He has the first place in everything. Both in the first creation and in the new creation Christ occupies the first place. In 1:15 we are told that Christ is the "Firstborn of all creation," and in 1:18, that He is the "Firstborn from the dead." The new creation of God is by resurrection. For Christ to be preeminent in the new creation means that He is the first in resurrection. He is the first both in creation and in resurrection. This means that He is the first in the old creation, the universe, and in the new creation, the church. The universe is the environment in which the church exists as the Body of Christ to express Christ in full. Christ is not only first in the church, the Body, but also first in the environment, the universe. This means that He is first in everything. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 66-67, 41-42)

Hymns, #496, #966, #189, #1197, #202

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1-8)

- A. The apostle's greeting (vv. 1-2)
- B. The apostle's thanksgiving (vv. 3-8)

II. The preeminent and all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God (1:9-3:11)

- A. The portion of the saints (1:9-14)
- B. The image of God and the Firstborn both in creation and in resurrection (1:15-23)

Crucial points

The background of the book of Colossians is that culture had been mixed into the church life. The constituent of the church should be Christ and Christ alone, yet the church had been invaded by certain elements of culture—especially religion, in the form of asceticism related to Judaic ordinances and observances (2:16, 20-21), and philosophy, in the form of mysticism

related to Gnosticism and the worship of angels (2:8, 18). Hence, the central concept of this book is that nothing should be allowed to replace Christ. Colossians concentrates on Christ as the Head of the Body. It reveals the profoundness, all-inclusiveness, and unlimitedness of Christ to a greater extent than any other book in the Bible.

In his introductory word (1:1-8) Paul indicates that Christ is our hope, reality, and grace. Following this is a long section unveiling Christ as the preeminent and all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God (1:9-3:11). God's will (v. 9) refers to the will of His eternal purpose, of His economy concerning Christ, not His will in minor things. The will of God for us is that we know this all-inclusive Christ, experience Him, and live Him as our life.

In verse 12 Paul gives thanks to the Father for qualifying us "for a share of the allotted portion of the saints." The portion of the saints here is the all-inclusive Christ for our enjoyment. We enjoy Christ as our portion "in the light" (v. 12). If we were still under the authority of darkness, we would not be qualified to share in Christ. But the Father has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (v. 13). By being delivered out of Satan's kingdom and transferred into Christ's kingdom, we have been qualified for a share of the allotted portion of the saints.

The book of Colossians reveals that Christ is preeminent. He is the "image of the invisible God," the expression of God's being in all His attributes and virtues (v. 15). As such He has the first place in everything. Both in the first creation and in the new creation Christ occupies the first place. In verse 15 we are told that Christ is the "Firstborn of all creation," and in 1:18, that He is the "Firstborn from the dead." He is the first both in creation and in resurrection. This means that He is the first in the old creation, the universe, and in the new creation, the church. This means that He is first in everything.

Lord's Day 2/27

Related Verses

Ephesians 1:3-6

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,

4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;

Ephesians 1:17-23

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,

20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Further Reading:

Life-study of Colossians, msgs. 1-3, 5-7