

The Person and Work of Christ

Col. 1:13-23

Intro: When we study Col. 2 we see that Christ is everything we need for salvation and for this life. Paul writes this letter to counter false teachers that attempted to add Philosophy, Legalism, Mysticism and Aesthetics to the finished work of Christ. Today, we want to look at Col. 1 and highlight what is described regarding the person and work of Christ. This area of study is important to differentiate between true faith and a cult. Always ask the question, how does this person or faith stand on the person and work of Christ and how does one obtain the benefits of that work?

The Person of Christ

I. Vs. 15 He is the image of God. Jn. 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God" ...but Christ, "has made Him known". So God is invisible but Christ has made Him visible. He is the "eikon" of God. The exact replica...like a photograph (vs a drawing). Man is created in God's "likeness" Christ is the image, the replica, the exact reproduction. He is self-existent...uncreated. He said in John, "if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." Notice the word all in vs 19. And in 2:3. We have everything we need in Christ.

II. Vs. 15 (cont.) He is the "firstborn over all creation". Some have tried to say He is a "created man or angel or semi-god". But notice John 8:58 "Before Abraham was, I Am". In Jn. 10:32, 33 "...we are not stoning you for any of these, (miracles)," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." So what does "first born" mean?

A. "Protokos" means right to rule, the ranking one, the heir, the one in authority. It has to do with rights of inheritance. It doesn't require birth or even 1st born order.

B. Remember Jacob was the protokos even though he was 2nd born. So Christ is the "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:1). His claims are far reaching: 1. Over angels (Mat. 13); 2. Over men (Mat. 25); 3. Over everything (Mat 28:18); 4. To be God (Jn. 8); 5. To forgive sin; 6. To raise His own body from the grave...He proved it and Thomas said He was right..."My Lord and my God".

III. Vs. 17 "He is before all things and by Him all things hold together". Jesus lived as God before He was ever known as Jesus. He is the "I Am" of Ex. 3. In Jn. 17 He prayed, "restore unto Me the glory I had with you before the world began." He is the "root" and "offspring" of David...the source (root) and yet the offspring (descendent). He holds everything together! The deist says God made everything, wound it up and went away...no way!! Jesus said, "My Father works up unto now and I also work..." Heb. 1:3 says, "Christ upholds all things by the word of His power."

IV. He made the angels. Thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities brings to mind a type of ranking of angels (Archangels, Seraphim, Cherubim, angels over certain geographic regions). Note: He is the one who made the angels. He is not a high angel. He is their creator...before all of them. Vs. 17 says He upholds them. When the angels announced the birth of Christ, they announced the physical birth of their eternal, self-existent Creator. Heb. 1: 6-14.

V. He gave life to the Church. He builds and guides the church. Paul describes the body of all believers as an actual physical, organic body...what does the head do? It is responsible for growth. It also controls the body and directs its action. He is the pre-eminent one!

VI. "All fullness dwells in Him." All God's attributes exist "dwell" in Christ. Jn. 1:14. Col. 2:9; 2:3.

The Work of Christ

Reconciliation: "katallasso" (Greek). Used in terms of exchanging coins. Found in 2Cor. 5:19 and Rom. 5:10. In Col. 1:20 Paul uses a preposition in front of the word to add to it...to intensify it. "Apokatallasso" meaning to reconcile fully! Why? False teachers said you need to add something to Christ's work. Paul is saying No! you are totally reconciled!

Five terms summarizing our salvation found in the New Testament:

1. Justification: The sinner stands before God as the accused and is declared righteous.
2. Redemption: The sinner stands as a slave and is set free by having his ransom paid by the blood of Christ. It deals with the root problem that he is a sinner by nature. Col. 1:14
3. Forgiveness: The sinner stands before God as a debtor with an unpayable debt. In Christ the debt is paid and forgotten. Our certificate of debt is cancelled. Forgiveness deals with the fruit...that sin which separates us from God's Holiness.
4. Adoption: The sinner stands as a stranger an alien, outside the family of God. Now, in Christ he is adopted, a son of God and joint heir with Christ. Adoption deals with our position in the family of God.
5. Reconciliation: The sinner stands as an enemy of God, at opposition to Him and at war with Him. In Christ he is now at peace with God and a friend of God. Reconciliation deals with our condition.

I. Vs. 20 The Plan of Reconciliation. How do we become reconciled to God? "through Him." "by making peace through His blood." "All things" refers to a totally redeemed universe. Rom. 8:20-22.

Vs. 21-22: "Once but now". This means present tense...currently reconciled! Why? Because He is sufficient. We cannot do this on our own we must be abundantly clear on this...Rom 5:6-10 points out we have no power (vs. 6), no merit (vs. 6), no righteousness (vs.7,8) and we're enemies of God (vs.10).

II. Vs. 20 The Means of Reconciliation. How did God do it? 2Cor. 5:21 "He became sin for us...that we might become the righteousness of God." Vs. 20 and 22 show He was our sacrifice He died. His blood shed that He might be our substitute.

III. Vs. 22 Why did He reconcile us? To present us holy, without blemish, and free from accusation. Notice 2:15 "having disarmed the powers and authorities..." So according to Rom. 8: 1,33 there is no condemnation no charges laid against us. So positionally, we are holy, without blemish, free from accusation...and one day practically we will be thus. One day, Christ will "present us" (Ep. 5:25-27.)

IV. Vs. 23 The Results of True Reconciliation. They remain. Cause (true reconciliation) Effect (they continue). Some confuse this and think you must continue in order to be saved. No! Continuance is a fruit of salvation. Jn. 15 True branches abide. 1Jn. 2:19; 2Tim. 1:12; Jn. 10: 27-30; Rom. 8:33-39.

How do we obtain the benefits of the work of Christ?

1. The work is a "gift of God." John 3:16. So you can't "earn" it.
2. You must have "faith." Heb. 11:6.
3. You must "believe in your heart." Rom. 10:9.
4. You can't "do" anything to earn it! Just trust in the finished work of Christ!! Ep. 2: 8,9.

Life Group Questions

1. When you read Colossians 1 about the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, what was it that overwhelmed you the most? Why?
2. How does the fact that Jesus is not only your Creator, but also your Redeemer and your Keeper provide encouragement to you? Can you tell of a time when you especially felt His protection and keeping power in your life?
3. If you are a Christian then you are adopted into God's family. What does adoption mean? How does being adopted into God's family make a difference in your life? What privileges of adoption do you enjoy?
4. God reconciled us to make us holy. (v. 22) Yet, we fail so often. Do you think God ever has "second thoughts" about saving you? Is it impossible to live a holy life here and now? How do you respond when you sin and fail Him? Thoughts?