

Colossians 1:18-23  
*“The Sufficiency of Christ”*

**Introduction:**

Christ existed as God, before and after Creation. By His very nature, Christ possessed an innate sovereignty over all things by virtue of being the creator of all things. But in His incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension, Christ obtained a new type of preeminence over all things, He gained the role as the Savior of creation and thus expanded His right to rule by virtue of being the One through Whom God reconciled His fallen creation back to Himself. He had the former sovereignty as God; He gained the latter sovereignty as the God-man. In the previous passage (vs.15-17) Paul taught his readers about Christ’s right to rule as the Creator, and in this passage, Paul taught his readers about Christ’s right to rule as the Savior of creation. In teaching these things he was making the case that Christ was completely sufficient to make and keep them in a right relationship with God. Therefore, rendering subservience to any other being was not only unnecessary, but it was also contrary to God’s will and purposes.

**I. He Has All Authority over God’s People: (vs.18)**

As this passage opens, we read, “*And He is the head of the body, the church*” (vs.18a). The Greek conjunction translated here as “*and*”, should actually be translated as “*also*”, because it is used in an additive sense. This is important because the grammar indicates that what is written here completes the thought of the previous passage (vs.15-17), while pointing forward to what follows. This is further demonstrated by how the introductory words of this verse “*and He is*” are parallel to the same expression that is found at the beginning of verse seventeen, where Paul extolled the universal sovereignty of Christ. Here the focus is turned specifically to the sovereignty of Christ over the Church as opposed to the cosmos. In addition, the use of the Greek pronoun “*autos*” with the third person singular verb “*estin*” is emphatic, stressing that the head of the Church is Christ, and no one or nothing else. The noun, “*the head*” stands in the predicate position and is marked by an article. In the Greek language this indicates absolute identification with the subject, again stressing the idea that Christ and Christ alone is to be identified as the head.

For much of church history there was little debate regarding the metaphorical meaning of the word “*head*”. However, there have been many focused studies in the past few decades on this metaphor due to the rise of modern feminism. The reason for this is because of Paul’s references to a husband being the “*head*” of his wife. This particular passage does not relate to that controversial subject; however, it is helpful here to know why a more in-depth explanation of the meaning of this word is warranted. In the ancient world, the metaphorical use of the term “*head*” was used to convey several related ideas. It could point to authority, to source, or to something worthy of respect or honor. Research indicates that it is likely that the ideas of both authority and source are never completely absent in meaning when

this figure was used in ancient literature. The difference one finds is that sometimes the emphasis is more upon authority, and sometimes the emphasis is more upon source. A close examination of the use of this metaphor in this letter clearly demonstrates that Paul used this metaphor to designate Christ as Creator and ruler, stressing the idea of authority each time. It is also helpful to recognize that when the figures of head and body are used as correlative terms (as they are here), the physiological relationship is in the foreground. Throughout the ancient world, the head was understood to be the governing member of a body, that which both controlled it and provided for its life and sustenance. Therefore, the imagery of Christ as the “*head*” of the Church, stresses that Christ is its sovereign. Though the figure may also suggest that He is the source of the Church’s life, that is not its primary significance here. The fact that this figure represents sovereignty is also made clear by how it is paralleled by the affirmation that Christ is before (meaning “*above*”) all things (vs.17a). Research also shows that the use of the body as a figure of the common life and interdependence of a political or social group of people was well known in antiquity. Therefore, this would have been a very meaningful metaphor for the original readers. And in the use of this metaphor in the ancient world, a head was consistently used to represent one who had superior rank. Paul’s use of this metaphor was not intended to be understood in a strictly organizational sense (as in a business), rather it presents the relational and organic union that the Church has with Christ. The metaphor pictures the idea that every part of the Church is intended to be guided by the direction of Christ, as the actions of a body are directed by a person’s head. Therefore, this metaphor also implies the necessity of the body (the church) being dependent upon the head (Christ).

Grammatically speaking, the expression “*the church*” in the Greek text is in the form of a genitive of apposition. This grammatical construction uses one noun to provide further definition to another. In this case, the expression “*the church*” clarifies what was meant when Paul referred to “*the body*”. Also, in this context the “*church*” that Paul was referring to is the universal Church, which includes all who belong to Christ.

Next Paul wrote, “*who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead*” (vs.18b). Within Jewish tradition, God was sometimes referred to as “*the beginning*”. This designation was also applied to Wisdom and the Logos, as it was a natural designation for the person from whom all things began. Here, the word “*beginning*” could be interpreted in two ways. The first possible meaning is the idea of temporal primacy, meaning a reference to something first in time (Matt.19:4; Heb.1:10; II Pet.3:4). The second possible meaning relates to primacy in authority or rule, a reference to having supreme rule in a given sphere (Rom.8:38). The flow of thought demonstrates that the idea stressed here is Christ’s sovereign position. Overall, in this verse there are three descriptive phrases applied to Christ. The following is the relationship between these three descriptions of Him: the reference to Christ being the “*beginning*” is further defined by the reference to Him being “*the firstborn from the dead*”, thus making the designation “*beginning*” a reference to His role in resurrection, while the reference to Christ being pre-eminent describes His exalted

status that resulted from His resurrection. Also, the repetition of the word “*firstborn*” here (used previously in verse 15), shows that in Paul’s mind there was a direct parallelism that existed between Christ’s relation to creation as its Lord, and Christ’s relationship to the Church as its Lord.

Elsewhere Scripture teaches that the general resurrection of the dead will take place at the end of the age; Jesus’ resurrection ahead of that time is presented here as the proleptic beginning or inauguration of that future event (I Cor.15:23). Christ was the first to rise in an immortal body (I Cor.15:20), and as such He became the head of a whole new race of human beings as their sovereign, since Christ’s resurrection marked His triumph over death, for Himself and for God’s people (Heb.2:14; I John 3:8). In this way Christ was the “*firstfruits*” of those who were to be glorified. In verse fifteen, the reference to firstborn referred to His supreme rank over the created world, here it refers to His role in the resurrection.

Then Paul wrote, “*that in all things He may have the preeminence*” (vs.18c). This clause expresses the purpose God had in the exaltation of Christ at His resurrection. And the phrase “*in all things*” expresses the universality of Christ’s supremacy. Here Paul asserted not only Christ’s sovereignty over the Church, but also re-asserted Christ’s sovereignty over all creation.

## **II. He Possesses Every Aspect of Deity: (vs.19)**

Next Paul wrote, “*For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell*” (vs.19). With these words Paul gave the reason why all God’s people and all creation have been put under the sovereignty of Christ. Literally, the initial words of this verse are “*for He was pleased*”. In the Greek text there is no subject given (there is no specific reference to God or the Father). The form of the verb indicates a third person subject only. In the context, Paul’s words are framed within the idea of Christ’s relationship to the Father, therefore, the translators of the NKJV correctly supplied “*the Father*” as the subject. The Greek verb translated as “*pleased*” means to take pleasure in, or to delight in something. The word is used frequently to refer to something that God purposed to do, but this word adds the dimension that it was something that He delighted in.

The key to interpreting this verse is determining precisely what Paul was referring to as “*the fullness*” that dwells in Christ. There are two very similar ways in which this statement is interpreted. Some argue that Paul was saying that this statement should be interpreted in light of what Paul wrote in the next chapter (2:9), which would mean that Paul was saying here that the fullness of God dwelt in Christ, and therefore the noun “*God*” should be assumed to be part of the sentence. Others argue that the “*fullness*” that dwells in Christ is the glory of God. The way Paul chose to express himself here indicates that the word “*fullness*” itself is to be understood as the subject of the verb. Because of this, it would be somewhat arbitrary to import a word from another passage simply because it expresses a parallel idea. Therefore, since it is better not to insert the word “*God*” into the text, this rules out the first suggestion, the idea then is that the “*fullness*” itself is what is said to dwell in Christ. The question then is to what does this “*fullness*” refer?

The most compelling explanation regarding the background of this term in this context is the Old Testament use of this language of filling specifically in regard to the Temple – the place where God dwelt and mediated His presence to His people. Although in the Septuagint we do not find this specific Greek word that Paul used here to refer to God and His presence, we do find an adjective from the same root term as well as a cognate term that frequently appears in connection with God's glory filling the Temple or the tabernacle (Ex.40:34, 35; I Kings 8:11; II Chron.7:1; Isa.6:1; Ezek.10:4; 43:5; 44:4; Hag.2:7). The "*glory of Yahweh*" in these passages is a way of expressing the visible manifestation of God's presence. The Greek word translated as "*fullness*" here is a key word in Colossians (used in 1:19 and 2:9, while the verb form is used in 1:9, 25; 2:10; and 4:17). These words refer to completeness and are used of a wide range of things including God's being (Eph 3:19), time (Gal 4:4), and grace in Christ (John 1:16). The "*fullness*" that is spoken of here is the glory of God, understood as the Divine presence, being fully manifested and present in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This would carry the implication that Christ was thus no less God than the Father.

Paul's choice to refer to Christ in specifically this way may have had something to do with the false teaching that was being disseminated in the Colossian church. For history teaches us that the Greek term translated here as "*fullness*" became a technical term in later Gnostic writings. And though fully developed Gnosticism did not manifest itself in Christian circles until the second century, it is very likely that this particular word was used in the first century by individuals who had beliefs similar to those that the Gnostics would later adopt. Given the beliefs that we know that were present at this time we can reconstruct what was likely being taught at Colossae. The false teachers at Colossae believed that there were many spirit beings that existed as intermediaries between the Creator God and the physical creation. The reason for this idea was the general belief that the god who created all things was far too morally pure to have any direct contact with the inherently evil material world. So, these other beings were like a chain of command under this creator god who managed the physical world. This belief naturally led to another belief, that any communication between the creator God and the world had to pass through these intermediate spiritual authorities. These false teachers undoubtedly included Christ among these spirit beings, admitting that He was of Heavenly origin and that God was in some sense present in Him. But would have also maintained that since Christ was only one of these beings, He was not sufficient in Himself for all the needs of mankind. This then would have been what Paul was refuting. Paul then was using the word "*fullness*" here to refute this entire perspective by saying that the total of the Divine essence and power was resident in Christ, so that no other spirit beings were needed and thus they did not exist. This statement advances the revelation about Christ. Not only was He the fullest visual manifestation of Deity (vs.15), in Him resides the totality of divine powers and attributes.

It is worth noting that both the idea of "*image*" and "*fullness*" are predicated elsewhere to Christians (Eph.3:19; 4:12-13). The idea then is that Christians

partake of these things because of their union with Christ, who possesses these things as part of His very nature. Therefore, the revelation made of Christ in the Gospel is not only profound, it is critical that it be correctly understood. Paul knew that it is only in grasping the truth about Christ, that the Christian can truly comprehend the significance of one's own identity as one who is in union Christ. And comprehending one's identity in Christ empowers a person by the Spirit to live the godly life that is the calling of a Christian. Paul's use of the word "*dwell*" was not precisely meant to make the reader think of the incarnation, but rather Paul was stressing the completeness of God's manifestation of Himself in Christ, and how any interaction with God would therefore have to be channeled through Christ.

Some writers have speculated about precisely when the fullness of God came to dwell in Christ. A number of these writers have suggested that it took place at the resurrection of Christ. Since Paul did not specify when this took place, it is best not to try to give a dogmatic answer to this. However, it seems unlikely that the focus was entirely on Christ's resurrection and ascension, because Paul's earlier references to Christ's role in creation are a part of his teaching on the exalted nature of Christ, and Christ's work in creation obviously pre-dated His resurrection.

The main idea here was the Colossians did not need angels or other spiritual beings to keep them in a vibrant relationship with God, rather in Christ they were made complete before God, and had complete access to God. Later in the letter Paul will base many of his specific exhortations to the Colossians on this central truth.

### **III. He Alone is the Means of Reconciliation with God: (vs.20-22)**

Next, Paul wrote, "*and by Him to reconcile all thing to Himself, by Him, whether thing on earth or things in heaven*" (vs.20a). The Greek word used here for reconciliation is a different one than what he used in previous verses. This one is an augmented form of the word that intensifies its meaning. Also, it is worth noting that in general Paul used the concept of reconciliation differently in his teaching than how it was normally understood in his time. In that culture, reconciliation normally involved the guilty party initiating the reconciliation. But Paul explained that in the Gospel, it was God, the offended party who took the initiative to reconcile human beings to Himself while they were still hostile to Him (Rom.5:8-10). Equally striking was his emphasis on the death of Christ as the means of accomplishing this reconciliation. This would have also subverted the natural expectations of that time. In that day people would have assumed that such a reconciliation would have required righteous deeds to be done by sinful human beings if they were to restore a relationship with an offended God.

It is important to note that theologically, it is never taught in Scripture that God is reconciled, or that both God and man are reconciled to one another. Instead, reconciliation is always said to have come from God and is directed toward human beings (II Cor.5:18-20). It is also taught that reconciliation is provisional in that human beings must willingly accept the conditions of repentance and faith. In the New Testament, theological reconciliation is always presented as being directed toward God the Father, whose wrath against sin is the background for the concept.

When Paul wrote about reconciliation here, he did not feel the need to argue for the need of human beings to be reconciled to God, he merely assumed the necessity. Also, since it is asserted here that all things are to be reconciled to God through Christ, it follows that all things must have been estranged from their Creator necessitating this reconciliation.

It is always important that we not interpret one passage in a way that contradicts what is clearly taught in other passages of Scripture. Specifically, here, though what was written might appear on the surface to teach that everything will eventually be brought into a saving relationship with God, we must recognize that this cannot be what the passage is actually teaching because many other passages preclude the idea of universal human and angelic salvation. Paul did use the words “*all things*” here to refer to the scope of the reconciliation that God accomplished in Christ. By this he meant that Christ’s work of reconciliation included the entire material creation, the animal world, humanity, and spiritual beings. Therefore, its scope is identical to that of the earlier statement about the extent of Christ’s creative work (which was also said to include “*all things*”-vs.16). Therefore, “*all things*” refers to all created things without exception. How then do we harmonize what Paul wrote here, with the truth we find elsewhere that not all people will in fact be saved? Some have attempted to do this by arguing that the words “*all things*” should be limited to redeemed humans and the elect angels. It is suggested that the absence of a reference to things “*under the earth*” (a phrase Paul used elsewhere-Phil.2:10) justifies this interpretation. However, by that logic, one could argue that demons were not ultimately created by God, because again there is no reference to “*under the earth*” in Paul’s teaching about Christ as the creator of all things. The reality is that the expression “*in earth or heaven*” would have been understood at that time as referring to everything everywhere (especially when linked to the words “*all things*”). Instead, the reconciliation of the invisible powers refers not to their salvation, but to their subordination to the rule of God and Christ. Though these powers at present have dominion in the world (2:8), they are not a power that can resist Christ’s kingdom. At God’s appointed time they will lose their sovereignty. What Paul wrote here should be read in light of what he would state later in the letter (2:15). In that verse Paul stated that Christ would triumph over rulers and authorities. Therefore, here reconciliation includes what would independently be called “*pacification*”. The principalities and powers whose conquest is referred to in that verse were certainly not depicted as gladly surrendering to Divine grace, but as being compelled to submit to Divine sovereignty by a power they will be unable to resist.

Continuing in his discussion of reconciliation, Paul wrote, “*having made peace through the blood of His cross*” (vs.20b). The Greek word translated as “*having made peace*” is a rare compound word that only appears here and nowhere else in the New Testament. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, we find Paul referring to the same idea using two separate words to express this same idea (2:15). The implied subject of the participle is God the Father who made the peace through Christ. This participle further defines the idea of reconciliation by explaining the result of it. In

these verses Paul taught that Christ's shed blood not only accomplished the forgiveness of sins for those who would believe, it also secured the ultimate shalom for all of Creation. This then was the fulfillment of the OT anticipation of a Messiah who would usher in an era of shalom that was heralded by the prophets (Isa.9:1-7; 11:6-9; Zch.9:9-10; Micah 5:2-6). This statement then reinforced the idea that what the Gospel provided was a fulfillment of what God promised under the Old Covenant. It is also likely that this language of making peace would have evoked comparison to the claims of Imperial Rome and their empire wide "*Pax Romana*" where peace came as a result of the pacification of many nations through the empire's many military victories. Paul taught here that the Divine purpose in God's reconciliation through Christ was the restoration of the harmony of the original creation, to bring all things into renewed oneness and wholeness.

Then in verse twenty-one we read, "*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled*". The temporal adverb "*once*" forms a contrast with the temporal adverb "*now*" in verse twenty-two, and thus here, Paul was describing the spiritual condition of these saints prior to when they gave their allegiance to Jesus Christ. With the writing of this verse Paul changed his focus in his discussion of the reconciliation that Christ accomplished. He would no longer focus on the general sphere of reconciliation (*all things*) but would instead focus on one aspect of reconciliation, that of the saints (as represented by the Colossians). Paul now explained that reconciliation was necessary because people in their fallen state are alienated from God. Though there is not an explicit reference to God as the one from whom the Colossians were alienated, this is certainly implicit in the context. Because the reconciliation that was accomplished by Christ is explicitly stated to have been directed toward sinful human being, ending their alienation and rebellion against God (1:21-23). In these next few verses Paul explained that the reconciliation accomplished by Christ was God's way of responding to the Fall of mankind, because it was the Fall that made this reconciliation necessary. The Greek conjunction "*kaí*" (*and*) that connects "*alienated*" and "*enemies*" is exegetical, so that the reference to "*enemies*" explains the nature of the alienation. Therefore, the use of the term "*enemies*" stresses the hostility that these believers had toward God prior to their conversion. Grammatically speaking, the use of a present participle with a perfect participle (as we find here in the words "*were alienated*") forms what is called a periphrastic construction that expresses more forcibly the intended contrast between what had been true in the past and what was true in the present. Namely, stressing that in the past these saints had existed in a persistent state of alienation from God. Paul then stated the sphere of their hostility and alienation toward God, it was "*in your mind by wicked works*". The sphere of the alienation was in the mind. This statement needs to be understood from a Hebraic viewpoint. In that culture, the mind was understood to be equivalent to the heart, and it was representative of the entire person. The idea is that word "*mind*" refers to one's overall orientation and disposition toward life. In this case, one that is opposed to God, His plans, and His will. Throughout Paul's writings there is an emphasis on the important role that

the mind plays in the redemption process. This includes understanding how the mind was corrupted by the Fall. This inner aversion to God and the antipathy to His moral will which had formerly characterized the Colossians had revealed itself in wicked deeds, such as those that are enumerated very specifically later in the letter (3:5-9). Paul was not saying here that the cause of their alienation was their wicked deeds; rather that their wicked deeds came from their alienation from God. Their wicked behavior served to reveal the sinful and rebellious orientations of their hearts (Lk.6:45).

The distinction between justification and reconciliation, in which logical priority is given to justification, is rooted in the insight that peace, to be worthy of the name, must be established on righteousness. If human beings are to be reconciled to God, to enjoy peace with Him, they must have the assurance that He who will by no means clear the guilty, has nevertheless accepted them, sinful as they are.

Next Paul wrote that this reconciliation was accomplished, "*in the body of His flesh through death*" (vs.22a). It would appear that Paul combined the words "*body*" and "*flesh*" to stress the idea of Christ's literal incarnation (for it is possible that these false teachers might have been denying that Christ actually came in the flesh). A less likely interpretation was that Paul was simply clarifying that the word "*body*" was no longer referring metaphorically to the Church, but to Christ's literal body. The words "*through death*" express the means through which the reconciliation was accomplished.

Then Paul wrote, "*to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight*" (vs.22b). This final clause of verse twenty-two expresses God's purpose in His work of reconciliation. This would have been understood to be eschatological language because what is referred to here was known to be what would result from the great consummation of God's redemptive purposes that follows the physical return of Christ. Paul described God's purpose for the saints in three ways. The word "*holy*" has the basic meaning of being separated to God and thus separated from sin. A form of this same term is frequently translated as "*saints*" and designates them as having been consecrated to God, with the implication that their lives would reflect their close association with God. The Greek word translated as "*blameless*", literally conveys the idea of being without blemish, but is meant here in a figurative sense, expressing that the saints will be without fault before God (not guilty of any wrongdoing). The Greek word translated as "*above reproach*" refers to one who has no accusations that stand against him, with the idea that the individual has no sins for which to answer. These words ("*holy*", "*blameless*", and "*above reproach*") along with the verb "*present*" put the entire event in a sacrificial context, with ethical implications. These pronouncements that result from the believer's present justification, anticipates the pronouncement of the judgment day; just as the holiness of life which is progressively wrought by the Spirit here and now, is to issue in perfection at the appearing of Christ. Here this redemptive work is stated as the result of what Christ accomplished on the cross, but it sets the foundation for what Paul will write about at the conclusion of the chapter (vs.24-29), that his ministry was focused on fulfilling this same redemptive goal.



#### IV. He is Mankind's Only Hope: (vs.23)

Next, Paul wrote, “*if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard*” (vs.23a). The statement that Paul just made about his confidence in the effectiveness of the Divine provision made for those estranged from God through the death of Christ, is now qualified by a matching emphasis on human responsibility. This emphasis on the need to persist in faith and godly conduct was a regular feature of Paul's writings that should not be ignored. Through this Paul introduces, rather obliquely, the central concern of the letter, his encouragement to the Colossian Christians to resist the false teachings that had come into the fellowship, and to instead hold fast to Christ and grow in Him. Paul was addressing the believer's responsibility in the interval between their initial reconciliation and their ultimate presentation to God, that they continue in their faith in Him. This idea of holding fast to the hope of ultimate salvation is presented throughout the NT as the indispensable condition for attaining the goal of that salvation.

Some interpreters suggest that what Paul wrote here was not an expression of doubt, but of his confidence in these saints that they would succeed. It is argued that any sort of conditionality in Paul's wording here would be out of sync with Paul's teaching about the priority and superabundance of God's grace, because the idea of conditions is contradictory to teaching that salvation is offered as a pure free gift. The problem with this reasoning is that it contradicts the grammatical structure that Paul wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The structure is in the form of a first-class conditional sentence. That means it is stated as true for the sake of the point being made. But it still expresses a contingency that is dependent on the fulfillment of the condition, in this case that they continue in the faith. Therefore, Paul was not expressing either doubt or confidence, he was just expressing the reality that these saints needed to understand.

There is also debate regarding what Paul was referring to here with the word “*faith*”. Some argue that it refers to the content of what is believed, as it does in 2:7. However, the flow of thought indicates that Paul was referring to the need to continue in the act of believing. Paul was confronting the Colossians with the reality that their eventual salvation depended upon their remaining faithful to Christ and to the true Gospel.

When Paul wrote next “*grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away*” he was elaborating on what he meant when he admonished them to continue in the faith. The words “*grounded and steadfast*” refer to the conviction and persistence that the Colossian believers needed to show in both belief and practice. The Greek word translated as “*grounded*” should be interpreted as a causal participle, modifying the finite verb “*continuing*”, while the words “*steadfast and not moved away*” express the intended results that Paul wanted to see in their lives. The first of these states that result positively, the second states it negatively. The idea of being “*grounded*” conveys the idea of being firmly fixed on something like a foundation, while the idea of being “*steadfast*” conveys the idea of being strongly attached to something (in this case, the Gospel). Finally, the Greek word translated as “*not moved away*” refers to

not changing one's location, but rather remaining fixed in place. The phrase "*the hope of the Gospel*" refers to the hope that is generated by the Gospel.

These words were intended as a challenge to those who were tempted to embrace the false teaching that was being spread in this church. This was an urgent appeal to persevere in the Gospel in order that they might be presented as holy, blameless and without reproach on the day of judgment. This is because Divine preservation always presupposes human perseverance. At the same time, the idea is not earning or keeping salvation, for salvation is entirely an unmerited gift. Instead, perseverance proves that faith is genuine, and it is therefore indispensable to salvation. But though this perseverance involves the choice and commitment of the individual, it is still a matter of grace, because no one can continue in faith in their own strength (Jn.15:5), rather the enabling grace of God is needed from start to finish (Phil.2:12-13). God's enabling grace does not cancel out human responsibility and activity, it is what energizes them.

Paul completed this portion of the letter when he wrote, "*which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister*" (vs.23b). Paul may have intended this statement to counter the false teachers who claimed secret, esoteric revelations (2:18). The reference to "*all creation*" was almost certainly a way of portraying that the gospel of Christ as something that is offered to all peoples (Rom 1:8,13; Matt 24:14). In addition, the universal applicability of the Gospel would be an indication of its Divine origin and power. The idea is not that literally every person on the globe heard Paul preach. Rather, as in Acts 2:5 this phrase describes a wide range of people from various countries without including, for example, anyone from North or South America (cf. Gen.41:57; I Kings 10:24; Rom.1:8).

In describing himself as a "*minister*" Paul was using a word that had both a technical and a general meaning. The former refers to an official position in a local church (I Tim.3:8-13). The latter can refer to the service of God by different agents in various roles, including the ministries of women (Matt.8:15), angels (Heb.1:14), Christ (Matt.20:28), and of preachers of the gospel (I Cor.3:5). It emphasized that what Paul did was in service to Christ and God, as their obedient servant.

### **Conclusion:**

In this passage Paul taught the Colossian believers that Christ, because of His exalted nature, and redemptive work was completely sufficient for all their spiritual needs. This was done to set a foundation for the admonitions that would come later in the letter about aligning their life with the will and purposes of God.

Also, in this passage we can discern five truths about reconciliation: it transforms men, it appeases God's wrath, it comes only through Jesus Christ, it is available to all who will choose to believe, and finally every believer has been given the responsibility to proclaim it.