

This transcript incorporates significant revisions to the spoken message.

Submitting to the Preeminence of Christ

Praise the Lord. Let us come before Him again and ask Him to be with us and bless this time.

O Lord, we praise You; You did it all for us when You shed Your blood. You see the blood and You pass through so that we do not have to be destroyed by the destroyer. Lord, thank You for bringing us out of Egypt, out of bondage. You paid the price; You shed your blood; You gave Your body for us to eat, that we may have strength to walk into the wilderness, to the promised land. As Your redeemed people Lord, we now stand on holy ground. We know Your presence is here. We uphold Your headship. We pray that You would anoint all the speaking, anoint the words, and anoint our ears. This our Lord is Yourself, come forth in our hearts that we may receive You and know You and be blessed by You. Glory to You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us read from Colossians 1:14-19.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For (or because) by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that (so that) in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”

Introduction

The theme for our fellowship today is, “Submitting to the Preeminence of Christ.” A large portion of it will focus on seeing Christ and who He is, which leads us to understand why He should have the preeminence, and then ultimately how we submit to His preeminence.

After meditating on this passage, and preparing some points, I went to the Christian Testimony (CTM) website and listened to a few messages. If any of you have been on that site, you will see that there are many messages shared on this passage. This passage is so high and so profound that I wanted to double-check to make sure that, after meditating, what I felt the Lord had put in my heart was not from myself, but was consistent with what the other brothers have shared in the past. Also, if there were any repeated or redundant things that I had jotted down, I removed them. If there is a need to share some brief context, then I will say that a certain brother had already shared this in that context, and then I will share what the Lord has shown me.

I admit this passage is very high, very profound, and I only see a little of it. But because Christ is so rich, it does take many, in fact, the whole church, to really know Him and understand Him.

I have extrapolated these points from the passage.

Christ is the Ruler of All Creation

Point number one: Christ is the ruler of all creation because all things were created by Him.

We will start with creation and how Christ is the creator of all things. In Genesis 1:1, it says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Brothers ahead of us have already shown that there was some misunderstanding in reading Genesis 1: 1-2. There are those who think this is the beginning of all creation, but brother explained that there was a former world before Adam was created.

The former world began when God created the heavens and the earth. The time-period from the creation of the heaven and the earth to Adam we call prehistoric, meaning before human records. There are things written in the Bible that about that world. What we are concerned with here is that Christ is the creator of all things.

He created thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. Briefly, a throne is a chair, but it represents the place where power comes forth. *Thrones* here is plural. God created archangels, and then other angels, and gave them thrones that they would rule. Dominion is the realm or the jurisdiction where power extends. Principalities are those angels who were given the power from God to rule and reign. As for the fourth category, "powers," I am not entirely certain, but according to the literal definition in Greek, it refers to those angels who had authority granted or delegated to them by the principalities. It is like a Roman governor delegating authority to local magistrates. In any case, all four categories belonged to that original world God created. Taken together, these four categories show that God intentionally created them with the purpose of exercising rule.

Although God intended them to rule, we know that the archangel did not keep his position and rebelled against Him. From the Bible and even from physical fossil records, we can see that it was perhaps a violent, violent rebellion. He disrupted all things, shattered the order that God had entrusted him to keep, and abused his power. He wanted to be God himself, but he was cast down, and God judged him. Brother Kaung shared at the West Coast Christian Conference (WCCC) that after Satan was cast down, the earth entered a long period of ice age—coldness and emptiness. This was the result of God's judgment.

Then the Spirit of God moved, and He began to create once again. That is what we see from Genesis 1:2 onward. He created the earth and the things in it in six days.

Some brothers ahead of us have described this a recovery type of creation meant to restore what Satan had ruined in the former world. On the sixth day, God created man. Consider carefully what God says in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion (*rule*)."

Again, there is the purpose to *rule*. Then in verse 28, He spoke to them saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and ... *rule*." God's purpose appears once more.

From prehistoric times to the time when God created the angels in heaven and ten all things on earth, His purpose remained unchanged. But there is a difference between the rebellion of the archangel, who took one-third of the angels with him and man's rebellion: there was no provision for the fallen angels to be restored.

Adam fell, yet God's purpose remained unchanged and continues. He provided His only Son, Jesus, to redeem us back to Him. That is truly precious.

He redeemed us, and His purpose continues: He wants us to rule for Him, rather than having angels rule for Him. Thus, we see verses in the New Testament that tell us He did not subject the world to angels. Hebrews 2:5–6 says, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" God's heart was set on having man to express Him and to exercise His power on His behalf.

Despite man's fall, the way God's salvation works is that He saves us, and then He enters into us to rule in and through us. When we get to Revelation 20:4, John writes, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them..." Thrones appear again. In the very earliest creation there were thrones. But Satan, Lucifer, and the other archangels failed—they rebelled. At the end of the Bible, we see thrones again, and these are for man.

Man, in God's heart, has a purpose: to sit on thrones, to reign with Him and to reign with His Son. He reigns through us, in us, and we in Him. In Revelation, we see thrones and judgment were given to them. It says they rule with Him for a thousand years; that is, they rule with Christ. "With Him" emphasizes that He is the primary one exercising authority.

Thank the, Lord. I find this aspect of creation very precious.

All Things Were "Become" by Him

In Colossians 1:16, the first part says, "By Him were all things created." Then it repeats, and says, "All things were created by Him, and for Him." There is a slight difference in the tenses. Let us look at the first one.

It does say, "By him were all things created." Looking more closely, in John 1, it says, "All things were made by him." In the original Greek, the word for "make" is "*become*." The name of the Lord in the Old Testament, "Jehovah," has the meaning of "become." That is why He said in Exodus, "I AM that I AM;" from the verb "to be." He is our Lord Jesus. Our Lord Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. You can translate this as "All things were 'become' by Him,"

"*Become*" means that when there is nothing, He brings it into existence or He made it "become" into existence where there was nothing. Romans 4:17 says, "God calleth those things which be not as though they were." This shows that God is able to call things that do not exist as if the already do.

How precious it is that even today He is doing the *becoming*, He is still calling things into existence. When we need something that we do not have, He is calling it into being. I can give some examples.

In the Old Testament, 2 Kings 18-19 and Isaiah 36-37, when King Sennacherib of Syria surrounded Israel, the people might have thought, "Oh, we are doomed, Lord, we are doomed." At that time, Rabshakeh said to them, "Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?" They might have felt panic, having no one to trust who could protect them. But the Lord "called" a way to defend them. He sent His angel, who struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. We all know how that situation ended.

How about when the children of Israel came to the Red Sea? They were all discouraged. "Oh, there is no way, no way. We are trapped; we are doomed." But what does God *become*? What would He say? "You say, there is no way? I call it, there is a way." His way was in the sea, Psalms 77:19. Praise the Lord.

In our daily life, I recently had a relative who was coming to the end of his rope. I cannot go into the details of his story, but I prayed. Our family gathered together and prayed for him, and I used God's word, "His way is in the sea." Psalm 77:19. When you feel at the end of the rope, the Lord does not see it that way, He is the "Jehovah *become*. There will be a way; He calls, "*There is a way.*" We prayed and prayed. Not long after, the Lord opened the way, and he was able to continue with his life.

All Things Have Been "Created" by Him

The second part of Colossians 1:16, concerning His creation of all things, one, says, "All things were created by him." The tense is actually perfect and can be translated as, "All things have been created by Him."

This tense means that there is a completed fact - all things were created - and the result of that action continues, creation continues. All creation, once God brought it into being, continues.

As I was meditating on this, I thought, "Oh, there is something here." I felt a little fearful. I looked through the Bible from beginning to end, and nowhere does it say that God "de-creates" any man. Once a man has been created, he cannot be, or God never "de-creates" him.

What is the implication of that then? Well, for those archangels who rebelled, God has appointed an end. In Revelation 20, we see that they all have a final state that is not non-existence. It is not de-creation, but they are cast into a lake of fire. The beast, the false prophet, Death, and Hell, and Satan are all destined to be cast into the lake of fire.

How about man? Our loved ones who have not been saved? This puts an urgency in my heart because their end is not de-creation, they do not cease to exist. It is not simply that once you are dead, you stop experiencing things. You do not vaporize and cease to exist. No, that does not happen. From henceforth, creation continues.

There are many aspects you could consider about this, but I just felt, “Oh, we who have been saved, we will live. We get to live forever with Christ, with God.” That is a great blessing! But for our loved ones who have not been saved, we really must pray for them. The sense of urgency is great, because no one will be de-created, no one will cease to exist.

Christ is the Beginning, First, and Before All Things

I have grouped these together because they are similar in some ways. Let us look at, “*He is the Beginning.*”

The Beginning

In Revelation 1:8, Jesus Himself said, “I am the beginning;” taken from the verse, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending;”

There is great significance in His being the beginning, in that it carries the sense of eternity – of a time in the past so far and so long ago that it reaches into eternity past. In Genesis and in Isaiah, there is a phrase that appears only twice; when Abraham called on the name of the Lord, he also called Him, “the everlasting God.” Our Lord Jesus, He is the everlasting God.

He was in eternity without an identifiable beginning or end. Even before our understanding of time, there is a phrase used to refer to God as the everlasting God, the God of eternity.

It is not merely an everlasting past or future – just eternity. To illustrate it more simply, I liken it to a circle. A circle has no beginning or end; you cannot find a starting point or ending point. Eternity, that is God; that is our Lord Jesus in eternity.

Furthermore, then In Psalm 90, we see a different description of our Lord. It says, “Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” Speaking in very simple terms, just take that circle and imagine breaking it open. In school, we call it a number line: there is zero, to the left is negative infinity and to the right positive infinity. Our human minds cannot fully grasp eternity, because after God created time, we naturally think in terms of eternity past and eternity future. But our Lord Jesus was already there in eternity.

In John 1:1, it says, “In the beginning was the Word.” which still does not refer to a fixed moment in time. In the original Greek, the verb ‘was’ is in the imperfect tense,” indicating ongoing and continuous action. It can be translated as “*In the beginning was being the Word.*” When you read “*was being,*” it does not point to a specific moment in time; rather, it conveys continuous existence with no visible beginning.

Brother Kaung has said that in the verse, “in the beginning was the Word,” that word *beginning* refers to eternity past. Our Lord Jesus, He is the Word, was there already. Furthermore, in the original Greek there is no definite article “the.” It is not in the beginning; it is simply in beginning, in any beginning. This, of course, includes the beginning that is eternity past.

Let us bring it a little closer to us. He is the beginning. In this context, we think of *beginning* as a person rather than a moment in time. The *beginning* is Him, it is a person. When we are about to start something, begin something, is Christ involved? Is Christ *the beginning* in whatever we do, especially in ministry?

For example, a brother had spoken some messages. He transcribed them and printed them out as a book. He felt he might want to do a second book. He prayed about it, waiting for the Lord to be *the beginning* of that book. But the Lord, through other brothers, transcribed it, printed it, and passed it out already. Thus, the brother did not initiate anything on his own. If it were the Lord's will, he would let the Lord be *the beginning*—even write that book. In light of this, we see that it can be applied to our everyday life, to our work, our career, and more: He is the beginning.

The First, and the Firstborn

The term *firstborn* contains within it the concept of being *first*. He is the First. We will look at what it means to be first, then look at *firstborn*.

In Revelation 22, Jesus said, "I am the beginning and the end, the first and the last." As the First, He possesses primacy, meaning He is first in order and highest in rank. Christ holds the highest authority. Thus, by virtue of being the First, He already has preeminence; He is the chief of all things, the head of all things.

If we truly understand Him – even in just the one word "*first*," we would fully submit to Him.

There are two *firstborns* mentioned in Colossians 1:15 and 1:18

Firstborn of all creation

Let us look at the first term, "firstborn." It says, *firstborn of all creation*. Here, I have heard two different interpretations. I will simply share them, and leave it up to you to pray before the Lord.

The first interpretation is that *firstborn* also means He is the supreme one among all creation. It carries the meaning of being chief, the leader, and the ruler - ruler or chief of all creation. Firstborn in Greek has this meaning: not only being the firstborn from the mother, but also being the chief.

The other interpretation is that Christ took part in creation so that He could accomplish salvation. Hebrews 2:14 says, "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same." Some Christians, being reverent toward God, would say, "How could He take part in creation? He is the Creator." How you and I interpret that, we can go and pray before the Lord, but this is another interpretation I offer.

There is no need to get into the theological debate about the Deity. What is important is that Jesus Christ did take on flesh for the purpose of dying for us. As our Redeemer, for that fact alone, He deserves to be given honor and preeminence. Another meaning of

being the *firstborn* is, again, highest in the order, first in the order, and thus having priority and rank.

Right before it says, “the firstborn of all creation,” it says He is “the image of the invisible God.” I did not want to omit that. Although I spoke about the firstborn first, this is related.

In the sentence, “being the firstborn of all creation” is separated by a comma from “being the image of the invisible God.” That is an appositive, meaning it either explains the former or renames it - they are equivalent. Let us look at what it means to be the image of the invisible God.

Being the image has the idea of yielding to someone. I will make a very simple illustration. If you are at a carnival and there is an artist, would you yield yourself to be painted by the artist?

There is that meaning of yielding yourself to let that person paint you. Here it has the meaning of yielding to the Son to be the image of the invisible God. *Image* is something that reflects; it ought to resemble.

Maybe after you look at the artist’s painting, you say, “That is not me; that does not look like me.” It ought to resemble, so that when another person sees the painting, they will say, “Oh, that is you,” because it looks like you. It has those meanings.

Our Lord Jesus said, “You see Me, and you see the Father.” This I have also heard in the messages that brothers have already shared. The image includes all of God’s character; His attributes, His virtues, all are captured by the image who is the Son - captured by Him and expressed by the Son.

The word for that is “glory.” All of who God is, when expressed by the Son, is glory of the Father. What is the implication of this? We must not make any image, any graven image, and worship it; that is the second commandment. What can man possibly do to create something to represent God? It is a gross misrepresentation. Whenever we draw something or carve something - a statue or a painting - and say, “This is the image of God,” we are grossly misrepresenting God.

We fall far short of capturing who He is, far from the truth of who He is. But man, throughout history and even today, tends to like to worship images and say, “That is God. That is my god.”

Let us take one example from the Old Testament. A very common image that God detested His children to worship was Baal. The meaning of worshiping Baal - the word *Baal* itself - just means, “owner.” You are the owner of your car, the owner of your house. So worshiping Baal means, “I am the owner of my things; I am the owner of my will; I own my abilities. Hence, I do things out of my will.” That is worshiping Baal, not worshiping Christ.

So being the image of God also has the meaning of Christ having preeminence, because He is the perfect representation and can fully express God.

Firstborn from the dead

Let us come to the second firstborn - *firstborn from the dead, first begotten of the dead*. I will put it in a context that brothers have already shared with us before. There are two creations, the old and the new. The old was the first, and when the second, or the new creation came in, the first became the old. s

The old creation is the realm of Adam, the realm of Satan, who is the god of this world. Colossians 1:13 says we have been translated out of that kingdom into the kingdom of His Son. There is another realm: a new creation, a new world that came after the resurrection.

This you can find in *The Normal Christian Life*. Other brothers have also shared. So, in that context, I meditated on some other verses. In Psalm 2:7, it says, "Thou art my beloved Son; this day have I begotten thee." This is referring to the resurrection.

In John 16:21 our Lord Jesus was speaking to His disciples. They were sad that He was about to leave them. But He told them this: when a woman is in travail, ready to give birth, she may be in great pain. That is referring to Him going to the cross - great pain. But after she delivers the child, she forgets the pain for the joy that a man has come into the world. From what Jesus said, resurrection is birth; that child being born is the resurrection.

Resurrection also is the beginning of the new creation. Putting that together, He is the firstborn from the dead. As such, He deserves preeminence just for being the first. Again, carrying that meaning of primacy, He deserves preeminence.

Also, we can use the meaning of *firstborn* that the firstborn is the heir and has the right to inherit all things. God the Father gave all things to His Son, Jesus. This is also shown in the Old Testament. It says, "Abraham gave all things to his son Isaac." He had other sons, but he gave all to Isaac. As the heir, he owns the inheritance. As the owner of all things, He can do whatever He wills; He deserves preeminence in that.

I thought of another thing about His resurrection, which shows why He deserves our honoring His preeminence from Ephesians 1. Let us read that passage.

Ephesians 1:19-21 says, "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead."

Let us pause there for a second. It was God's mighty power that raised Christ from the dead. In Colossians, there is another word, "energia," meaning great energy. You can think of it as a battery with a lot of voltage. That is power - mighty power. When it is put to use, that is working power - that is energy. Both, working together, raised Him from the dead.

In Romans 6:4, it says He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. I thought, “Well, raised by the glory.” Glory also has power. What is glory? Glory is God’s nature manifested. How great is it when God the Father manifests Himself? How much power is in that – power that raised Him from the dead?

We can continue from Ephesians 1:20, “And set Him at His own right hand (which also denotes power) in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.”

I thought, we just read that - we just saw that. Well, yes, He created them. Although when Jesus was on earth, the dark forces came together and put Him to death, they did not have power over Him. Once He was risen from the dead, He was set far above those powers, and above “every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” Without even expounding these few verses, it is self-evident that our Lord Jesus’ resurrection deserves our submitting to Him the preeminence.

Another very precious thing about His resurrection is in 1 Corinthians 6:14, where it says, “And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power.” So, in Him, all that He went through, He shares with us - we share in Him. I thought that was also very precious.

Before All Things

Lastly, Colossians 1:17 says He is *before all things* where “before” also carries the meaning of high rank. He is the chief; He is the mighty One in terms of place in that He is before all things.

Let us put it this way. If we are walking with Jesus and He is before us, what does that mean? It means we follow Him. He leads; we follow. This can be applied to our everyday life as well. Is He before us in everything we do? He leads us, and we follow. Any initiative that is taken—before I do anything—He does it. He leads it; I let Him lead. Whether it is choosing a career, or moving, or starting a business, or starting a ministry, He is before all things.

How about before time? As I was meditating on this, I thought this would have even more impact. In creation, we see things on a timeline. Eternity past is a long time ago. We use terms like *eons ago*; that is a very, very long time. But eternity past, beyond measure. Or even infinity itself, like a circle. But when you add the word “before,” what does that do to all those? That reference point places all those - eons ago, infinity past - even before those, Christ was. No one else could even come close.

Hypothetically, even if anyone could search as far back as infinity past, Christ is before all things. He is the chief; He is the head; primacy is in Him. He deserves to be the preeminent One.

By Christ, All Things Consist

God created all things. Hebrews 1:3 says He holds all things by the word of His power. Today, even our body and our environment - He holds it all together. He sustains all things so that we can live in this environment. A brother who was dying was saved by that word from Hebrews: "He holds all things by the word of His power." Even his body, He holds together.

After two rebellions, two falls - Lucifer's fall and Adam's fall - what is the state of the universe or the old creation?

Under the devil's rule, it is in discord and disorder. It is chaos at all levels. To make it easier to understand, let us first think of human interaction. Can two people form a business partnership and get along well? Even with a written contract, it is hard to get along. People cannot get along - even family members. Without Christ, the devil comes in to wreak havoc. It is just breaking up, breaking up – divide and divide.

I will put it a little humorously. How about at the molecular level? If God does not hold things together, consider molecules - two molecules sitting next to each other and saying, "Look, I do not like you being so close to me." Then what? "Let us separate." Astrophysicists say that in trillions and trillions of years, the whole universe will go into nothingness - cold, dark nothingness. According to entropy, all heat will dissipate, all energy will die down, all lights gone – just dark, cold nothingness. That is the old creation.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says old things have passed away, and He makes all things new. In the new creation, our Lord Jesus continues; He will hold all things together. Even our new body - He holds it together. The new heaven and new earth, our environment - He holds it together so that we may live forever.

That He Might Have the Preeminence

There is that phrase in Colossians 1:18, "that in all things Christ might have preeminence." Sometimes when I read things, I thought it was only the part near the phrase that applies. But in Greek grammar, if the elements are related in meaning, it permits us to draw a cumulative conclusion: that all points - being Creator, image, first, beginning, and so on - He being all these, are so that He might have the preeminence. That shows the purpose.

We can now give a clearer definition of preeminence: He is the highest in rank; He surpasses all, in all things, in power, in might, in everything. He supersedes all things; He overrules all.

So, when we come to the last point - even my will - He supersedes my will, my desires, my preferences; He supersedes. That is putting Him in preeminence.

The Fullness of God Dwells in Christ

This is the last verse, Colossians 1:18b-19: "That in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."

Fullness

I heard messages on CTM about fullness, and it is very rich. Simply put, fullness is all of God Himself what makes God, God: His essence, substance, might, everything about Him.

Then I also looked at it from another perspective: fullness is the state of being filled to the brim. But God's nature is eternal. How can you fill to the brim when His nature is eternal? When His nature is eternal, there is no limit.

In the Bible, we read about His character. Like, He loved you with everlasting love. How can you fill love to the brim? It is everlasting; it is infinite. His mercy endures forever. His kingdom is forever; His wisdom is infinite. So being filled, you must think of it without a limit - it is always full, no gap, no lacking. That is the meaning of fullness about Him.

The last point: dwells in Him, dwells in Christ. Then what happened? We see Paul writes in Ephesians 2:7, calling it the unsearchable riches of Christ. Unsearchable does not mean you cannot find it. God wants us to find it. It does not mean it is unavailable. It means it is not traceable to the end. You follow in His footsteps, and you cannot find the end of Him - He is unlimited.

The implication of this is very precious. We can put it together: He is the beginning and the end; He holds all things together; He is the fullness of God.

We see that in the new creation He sustains us, and His unsearchable riches will never run out. He also is eternity; we will live in eternity. We have eternity of time - if we call it time - to know Him, to experience Him, to enjoy Him.

Pleases Him that Fullness Dwells in Christ

What about the phrase, "For it pleases Him that all fullness dwells"? Why does it use the word "for," or "because"? It says that He might have preeminence "because" it pleases Him that the fullness dwells in Him.

"Pleasing Him," as I meditated on this, I thought of how the Father said in multiple places, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." No one questions that. It is the Father's own pleasure to do whatever He wills. And He wills that His fullness dwell in His Son, Jesus. No man can question that. Yet the Scripture qualifies it: it is because it pleases Him that the fullness dwells in Him.

How does fullness dwell in Him? Does it give Him preeminence? You must imply it. It is inherent in the meaning. As I meditated and thought about it, it is inherent in fullness that there is a capability to have preeminence.

Also, on whomever the fullness dwells, that person becomes the preeminent one, you must imply this. You need to think about it a little bit; otherwise, there is a sense of a gap.

This is very precious and very important: God would have His fullness dwell in no one else but His own Son.

We can also draw an application about this from Colossians 2:9 when it mentions the fullness dwelling in Him bodily. What was the context?

The preceding verse says, “Beware so that you are not taken captive.” There are four things listed, then it says, “For in Him all the fulness dwells.” Let us briefly consider these four things because I thought this was very important.

First: Do not be taken captive by philosophy. People love wisdom. I was in college taking a philosophy class, and I told the professor, “I do not like philosophy because most of philosophers are atheists.” He replied, “Well, that is not entirely true. A lot of philosophers spend time thinking and proving the existence of God.” What good is that? I read some of those arguments—they go through motions, this and that, to conclude there is a God. But if it is not in Christ, it is meaningless: no salvation, no eternal life—it is just spinning in the head. Do not be taken captive by philosophy.

Second: Vain deceit. There are many different religions today, and some are very similar to Christianity. They have the Bible, they preach the Trinity, and even the crucifixion.

They claim to be modern prophets or apostles. They teach some truth, but then slowly add extra things. If it is not in the Bible, we must be very careful. It is Christ Himself; it is all about Christ Himself. If it is not in Him, it is vain deceit.

Third: Tradition of man. Many messages have been spoken on this in the past. For example, we talked about communion, the Lord's table. Over time, taking communion can lose its significance, and become a tradition. So, we need the renewing of the Spirit in everything we do so that it does not become mere tradition.

Fourth: Rudiments of the world. The world has crept into the church in many ways; it is hard to identify specifically. I could try, but we leave it up to the Lord and His Spirit to enlighten us. In my life I need to remove worldly things around the house. In my heart, I must not be taken captive by the things of this world.

Double Assurance

From this structure, we see those points of who He is - being all those things - so that He might have the preeminence. Then it adds, *because it pleases God the Father that the fullness dwells in Him.*

It is a double assurance that Christ must have the preeminence in two different ways: “so that” shows the purpose, and “because” shows the end. What caused Him to have the preeminence is the pleasure of the Father.

I spent all this time going through this leaving only one last point, which was supposed to be the theme of this sharing. Why? I prayed - even for myself - as I was preparing to share this. I am persuaded, oh Lord, I am persuaded: seeing Christ and who You are, I am persuaded that You must have the preeminence in the Church, in the new creation, in our lives. I give You that preeminence.

Submitting to His Preeminence by Bearing the Cross

In Colossians chapter two, counting how many references there are, in one form or another, about the Lord Jesus and the cross, there are eight times. Let us take a look at just a few.

For dealing with our flesh - the lust of the flesh - He brings in the circumcision of Christ. Colossians 2:11 says the circumcision of Christ deals with the flesh.

How about the rudiments of the world? Buried with Christ, the old creation under the devil's rule - the whole system of evil and corruption - how do we get out of that? It is by death and burial. That is how we get out.

Then we are raised with Him in resurrection.

How about sin? Temptation of sin, like fornication, uncleanness, covetousness? Colossians 3:5 says to mortify members of the body. I picked out three, but there are eight in total. I counted eight different forms - all the same, all pointing to the cross of Christ. Today, if we want to experience and give Him preeminence, we come to the cross.

Finally, what is very interesting is this: if you notice, we did read Colossians 1:14, which says, “have redemption through His blood.” Do you the sudden takeoff from that point? Redeemed by His blood, then in verse fifteen it jumps so high: “image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation,” beginning, all things consist, etc. Why such a sudden takeoff?

Well, it must be immediate. Most of us may have been redeemed for many years, but as soon as one is redeemed, we ought to pray and ask our Lord to open our eyes to see Christ in His grandeur, His magnificent glory, as shown in verses 15 through 19.

Then in verse twenty it comes back to all having been made peace with and being reconciled, and it continues. It goes up with such a high takeoff and then comes back down.

He deserves to be given the preeminence, honoring Him as Lord, King and Head of all of us immediately, as soon as we are saved.

So, praise the Lord. Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus, almighty God, the preeminent one. Lord, I fall before You, oh, in humble worship, for You deserve it. What is man that You are mindful of him? Oh, thank You. You have brought us up to such a high position with You. We are lower than the angel. Lord, they rebelled, they do not have a means of salvation. But You personally came to save us, Lord. You restored us back to Your original purpose. Oh Lord, thank You for creating us in Your own image, for even putting us or entrusting us that we will loyally and faithfully exercise Your power and rule with You. Oh, and to enjoy Your glory. We do not deserve any, it is all Yours. But You would that You share Your throne with us. Oh Lord, thank You for all that grace. Praise You and glory to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitting to the Preeminence of Christ	1
Introduction	1
Christ is the Ruler of All Creation	2
All Things Were “Become” by Him	3
All Things Have Been “Created” by Him	4
Christ is the Beginning, First, and Before All Things	5
The Beginning	5
The First, and the Firstborn	6
Firstborn of all creation	6
Firstborn from the dead	8
Before All Things	9
By Christ, All Things Consist	10
That He Might Have the Preeminence	10
The Fullness of God Dwells in Christ	11
Fullness	11
Pleases Him that Fullness Dwells in Christ	11
Double Assurance	12
Submitting to His Preeminence by Bearing the Cross	13

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