

# Living Christ

## The Supremacy of Christ - Part I

### Colossians 1:15 - 20

**Overview:** This passage on the supremacy of Jesus connects the prayers of Paul to his goal to present every person mature in Christ. Paul's focus is Jesus who transcends us and unites us to a cause much greater than ourselves. The cause is Christ in us the hope of glory, and therefore to stand firm in the hope of the gospel.

**Outline:**

Christ: The Image of God – Col 1:15

Christ: The creator of all things – Col 1:16a

Christ: All things created for him and through him – Col 1:16b

Christ: All things are held together by him – Col 1:17

Christ: The head of the church – Col 1:18

Christ: The fullness of God – Col 1:19

Christ: All things reconciled – Col 1:20

**This study uses the WISDOM acronym:**

**W** – What is the main point, or key thought, and we work the issue

**I** – Investigate the scriptures. Study God's word.

**S** – Seek counsel from other sources, voices and articles.

**D** – Develop a response. The best response is a written one because there is many a slip from the mind to the pen.

**O** - Openly discuss your study with others; this is especially valuable in a small group or learning community setting.

**M** - Move to action. This is where we apply what we have learned to our lives. It is in application that we find that God's word is indeed living and active. And transformation occurs as the heart is impacted.

**Please note:** *This is a study guide, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. We need to walk in the truth therefore: It's you, the Holy Spirit and the Scripture in the interpretation process. Try not to relinquish your personal study to reading and repeating commentaries, check in with them as resource to make sure that your interpretation is not way off.*

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**W** [What is the issue] In reading the scripture the objective here is to determine the main point or points that Paul is trying to make.

**Read** *Colossians 1:15-20*

Ask yourself questions while discovering the main points in this text:

Ask the Who What Why When Where and the So what [what difference does this make – or it's the application question] questions to discover the main issue or issues that are in this text. Command to obey; doctrine to understand; life in the church to live out; and application (to myself) to apply.

Write down your questions...as you write, clarity regarding the text of scripture will emerge.

In reading the overview, develop your own questions to discuss:

Some suggested questions:

There are so many points to discuss

Take the outline and discuss each point

- Christ: The Image of God – Col 1:15
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## **I Investigating Scripture: Read Colossians 1: 15 – 20**

Overview on chapter One

The gratitude and prayer that Paul had for the Colossians' well-being now transitions into one of the greatest Christological passages in all of Scripture. This passage in Colossians 1:15-20 on the supremacy of Christ connects his thankfulness and his mission "to present every person mature in Christ."

Only the Supreme can make an individual's faith, hope and love have meaning. This meaning is founded in the person and work of Jesus Christ the unique and begotten Son of God, the second person of the Triune God. So as the people of Colossae came to faith by the preaching of the gospel through Epaphras, Paul's desire that not only that they grow in faith, hope and love but come to be filled with the knowledge of His will with spiritual understanding.

This spiritual understanding will enable the church at Colossae pursue the mission of presenting every person mature in Christ. For us to grow in Christ we need a supernatural hope which Paul says in Christ in us the hope of glory (Col 1:27).

The transition is marked by the reminder that we have been forgiven, redeemed, delivered, have an inheritance, and have been transferred from darkness into the Kingdom of the Son. This understanding coupled with the recognition that Christ is the supreme and unique God enables us on to a path of maturity.

Maturity is not some vague Christian notion for spiritual growth but the actualization of our redemption in Christ in our personal and corporate life and lifestyle.

### **Christ: The Image of God – Col 1:15**

He is the image of the invisible God: The word translated image (Greek word eikon) expressed two ideas.

- Likeness, as in the image on a coin or the reflection in a mirror.
  - Manifestation, with the sense that God is fully revealed in Jesus.
1. If Paul meant that Jesus was merely similar to the Father, he would have used the Greek word homoion, which speaks merely of similar appearance. The word used by Paul suggests that Paul wanted the readers to understand that Jesus is God just as God the Father is God. It means that “Jesus is the very stamp of God the Father.” (Robertson).
  2. “God is invisible, which does not merely mean that He cannot be seen by our bodily eye, but that He is unknowable. In the exalted Christ the unknowable God becomes known.” (Peake)
  3. The same word (eikon) is used of Jesus in Col. 3:10 and 2 Cor. 4:4. A similar theological expression occurs in John 1:18; 14:9; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:3. The Hebrews 1:3 passage has the stronger Greek term (charakter, which means an exact representation, Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9). To see Jesus is to know God! God became flesh – the incarnate Deity (John 1:14, 18; 14:9).

**1:16** “by Him all things were created” Jesus was the Father’s agent of creation, both of the visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly spheres (John 1:3, 10; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor, 8:6; Heb. 1:2; 2:10).

The verb “created” is used twice in Col. 1:16. The first is aorist passive indicative and the second is perfect passive indicative. This tells us that Jesus is the agent in creation but the Father is the primary cause. Creation was in (en) Jesus, through (dia) Jesus and for (eis) Jesus!

Please Note: I will complete this exegesis in part II of the lesson.

**S** Consult other sources

### **FIRSTBORN**

This word "firstborn" (prototokos) is used in the Bible in several distinct senses.

1. its OT background refers to
  - a. the firstborn belongs to YHWH (Exod. 13:2,12; 22:29; 34:19; Num. 3:13)

b. the pre-imminence of the firstborn son of the family (Deut. 21:17; Ps. 89:27; Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 11:28)

2. its use in Col. 1:15 speaks of Jesus as the first of creation which is a possible OT allusion to Pro. 8:22-31, or God's agent of creation (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2)

3. its use in Col. 1:15,18; 1 Cor. 15:20,23; Rev. 1:5 refers to Jesus as the firstborn from the dead

4. it is an OT title used of the Messiah (Ps. 89:27; Heb. 1:6; 12:23); it is a title which combines several aspects of the primacy and centrality of Jesus.

**D**[develop your response] This where we do our personal study and develop our personal response.

As we work the main point from scripture, look at Scripture and interact with other voices. We write down our response. Realize the value of writing – I realize that this is difficult but when we put on paper our thoughts the greatest connection between head and heart occurs.

Use the questions in work the issue and in the openly discuss section and also come up with some of your own.

Take time to write down your thoughts, questions, doubts, comments and answers. Even cryptic points that trigger conversations.

**O** [openly discuss] After we have our written response this is where we interact with our community or connect group and learn from one another. Share openly and honestly what our Lord has taught you from scripture. Your understanding may change as a result of your discussion with others. Let the Holy Spirit lead and be open to learn from one another. It is an amazing experience as the Spirit of the Lord shows up in our discussion and lives are touched and changed.

**M** [Move to action.] Apply God's word to your life, this where transformation occurs as the Spirit of God moves in your life and you respond to His prompting. This is where the heart connects with the head and the hands. Without application we will gain knowledge and remember what the apostle Paul says, 'Knowledge puffs up but love builds up.'

My personal application: { write it down and share it with someone who will hold you accountable }.

An application to ponder:

*How do I reflect Jesus in my life, my family, my work, my world?*

Maturity is the actualization of our redemption in Christ in our personal and corporate life.