

Many Facets of Jesus  
October 7, 2018

My wife used to be a school teacher. Occasionally one of her students would see her at a local store and be shocked. They would say something like, "Mrs. Shifflett, what are you doing here," as if teachers have no life outside of school. Of course most students only know their teacher at school. So they have a one dimensional view of their teacher.

But my wife is so much more than a school teacher. She is a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a cousin, a niece, a wife, a mother, a Christian, a church member, a choir member, and more. She is multifaceted. However, even here, among friends, she is not all of those things to you. You have never met her parents, her siblings, her cousins. So while you have a larger view of her than her students did, your view of her is still limited.

The same can be said, for all of us, concerning Jesus. We have a limited knowledge of who Jesus is. For example, some people heard an invitation to believe on Jesus and go to heaven instead of hell and they were baptized. Unfortunately they only relate to Jesus as a savior, as if that is all he is.

But Jesus is more than a savior. He is also the Lord of all the earth. He was designated to be Lord following his resurrection.

**Acts 2:36 (NIV) "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus... both Lord and Christ."**

As Lord, Jesus commands our allegiance, our obedience, commands us to repent of our sins, to live for Him. Seeing Jesus only as a savior leaves you in control of your life. Seeing Jesus as Lord means He is to be in control of your life.

Jesus is more than a savior. Jesus is Lord. And more than this, Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed one of God. Jesus fulfills all that the Christ was foretold to be and do. Prominent among these was the truth that He would be the rightful king of Israel and rule forever. His kingdom would never end.

So we see Jesus as Savior, as Lord, as Christ. But there are more sides to Jesus for us to know and appreciate. In today's study of Colossians we will learn even more about Jesus.

Colossians is a letter written by Paul, an early Christian missionary, to the Christians in the city of Colossae. We pick up in chapter 1, and verse 15.

**Colossians 1:15-19 (NIV) He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,...**

Like the Christians Paul wrote to, we need to see more of who Jesus is. This will help us grow mature in our faith. This will help prevent us from being led astray into non-Christian teaching. Those early Christians were in danger of this as we will see in this series.

In today's world there are many false teachings being preached in our world. There are philosophies, theologies, religions, and anti-religions that deny some aspect of who Jesus is. So we need to know what Paul reveals of who Jesus is. Let's discover these together. We will not spend the same amount of time on each.

### **1) Jesus reveals what God is like. (verse 15)**

"He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God..." There are two things that can be known about God from the world as he created it. The first is that there is a God. There is a creator. The world could not and did not just evolve on its own. Someone designed it and created it.

The second thing we can know about God through the creation is that God is very, very powerful. He would have to be in order to create the world we live in.

Beyond these things we cannot know anything else about God unless God reveals it by special revelation. This is what the Old Testament is. God inspired his people to write about their experiences with God. And in that, we learn much about God. The history of Israel, the Law of Moses, and the prophets all teach us aspects of what God is like. We see His attributes, His values, and His goals. But these things are not always easy to discern in those writings. If only there was someone who knew exactly what God was like and lived it out on earth for us to see.

Well, that is exactly what Jesus was and did. Jesus is God made flesh, without our human propensity to sin. So he was able to live a perfect life on earth. We can look to him and see more clearly what God is like.

We sing of this every Christmas. In the carol, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, by Charles Wesley, the second verse states,

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord:  
Late in time, behold Him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see.  
Hail the incarnate Deity!**

Veiled in flesh we see God in Jesus. Perhaps you have heard the story of the little boy who was drawing pictures. His mother walked by and asked what he was drawing. He said, "I'm drawing a picture of God." She replied, "But no one knows what God looks like." He answered, "They will when I get through!"

We all need to know what God is like, not a physical manifestation, but the character and values and purposes of God. And we see all of this in Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God.

### **2) Jesus is the head of all creation. (v15)**

"He is ... the firstborn OVER all creation." The word firstborn has two different meanings. It can mean the first to be born. We see it this way in Luke, chapter 2, where it reads that Mary brought forth her "firstborn son, wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger." Mary had never given birth to any other child. Jesus was the first. Firstborn can have this meaning.

But firstborn has another meaning. The second meaning relates to having the privilege of authority over something. Let me share with you several examples of this second meaning.

In the OT historical account of Esau and his twin brother Jacob, we see that Esau was born first. He was the firstborn. This is the first meaning of the word. But we also see the second meaning to be true of Esau.

It was common in that culture that the firstborn male child got a larger portion of the father's estate than all the other siblings. The reason for this is that the firstborn male became the head of the family upon the death of the father. And the heir would need extra resources to lead and care for them.

Esau, as the firstborn, had this inheritance birthright. But one day when he arrived home very hungry from hunting he sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of stew. So then Jacob owned the birthright and could be said to be the firstborn. He was not now the firstborn in order of birth, but in terms of the birthright to lead the family upon his father's death he was the firstborn.

This kind of birthright could be sold, traded, or even taken away. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn son and had the birthright. But Jacob took away the birthright from Reuben because of a great sin on Reuben's part.

It is this second use of the word firstborn that Paul is using of Jesus here. He is not part of the creation. He is head OVER creation. The next sentence by Paul affirms this meaning of firstborn. "He is over creation, for by him all things were created."

### **3) God the Son is the creator. (v16)**

This negates the use of firstborn in verse 15 to mean the first to be created. Jesus could not have created himself. Only God can create. Since Jesus made all things, Jesus is God. He is not part of creation. He is in authority over creation.

Note that he did not create some things, but all things. Paul names heaven and earth, visible and invisible, and all authorities and powers so that we see the all-inclusive creating work of Jesus. He created heaven and earth and everything in between. He created objects and he created authorities under His authority, be they an authority of spiritual or physical beings.

Note also that Jesus created everything for a purpose. He made all things FOR Himself. He created nothing for itself. You were not created for yourself. You were not created for you. You are not meant to be lord of you. You were created for Him. You were created for His glory. We were made to reflect his glory and bring Him glory. This is our purpose. This points to the next facet of Jesus.

#### **4) He must be our priority. (v17)**

"He is before all things." This is not referring to order but to importance. He is the center of the universe. We are to center our lives on Him. We are to build our lives on Him. He is not our sidekick. He is not an extra appendage. He is not an app. He is not an option. He must be central and first in all things in our lives. This goes back to him being Lord and us being created for His purposes. He is to be preeminent over everyone and everything in our lives.

#### **5) Jesus sustains creation. (v17)**

"In Him all things hold together." We have learned a lot about what God has used to make the world orderly. He has invented chemistry, biology, gravity, electricity, DNA, and more that we haven't discovered yet. But ultimately, everything holds together because Jesus holds it together. He is the force, the power, behind every force and power that science can "discover". He is the intelligent designer, creator, and sustainer of the universe. We exist every moment by His choice. We are not self-existent. Express thanks for his sustaining work.

#### **6) Jesus leads the church. (v18)**

"He is the head of the body, the church." In several of his letters, Paul uses the illustration of a human body for the church. Jesus is the head, giving direction to the body. The members of the church are the rest of the body parts, the hands and feet, etc. Together we make up the body of Christ. But Jesus is the head. The pastor isn't the head. The deacons aren't the head. The teachers are not the head of the church. The members together in business session are not the head. Jesus is the head.

And this is not in title only. By the power of the Holy Spirit which lives in each Christian, Jesus can build his church and mature us in the faith. He leads the church through us to each other. We must learn to submit to His leadership over His church. Pray for His direction for this church. Pray that we all will be filled with the knowledge of His will.

#### **7) He is the start of resurrection life.**

Paul tells us, in two marvelously descriptive phrases, exactly why Jesus is the Head of the body. First, Jesus "is the beginning." The beginning of what? Jesus is the beginning of the resurrection from the dead. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Here that first use of the term firstborn is used, but applied differently. Here it is not used for human birth, but instead it is used for resurrection.

You see Jesus being raised from the dead is the evidence in support of the truthfulness of God's promise that we will all be raised from the dead. Despite the fact that some Christians have died giving the appearance that life ends at death, God has promised that we will all be raised from the dead. We will all get a new, resurrection body, like that of Jesus. In this body we will live with Jesus forever.

Up until now, the resurrection of Jesus is the only resurrection that has ever occurred on this earth. Lazarus, and all the others who came back from the dead, were simply resuscitated. They came back to the same life they had before. But Jesus was truly

resurrected. He was given a glorified body. And we too will receive such a body. But he was the first.

This is fitting since he died as the perfect sacrifice for sins. He is supreme in everything. All of God's fullness lives in Jesus.

**Jesus is superior over \_\_\_\_\_.**

Jesus is superior over anyone or anything that anyone could think of to put in that blank. Jesus is superior to any idol, any human, any angel, any other deity. Jesus is superior to them all.

He is a savior, but not just a savior. He is the image of the invisible God, the authority over all creation, the maker, sustainer of all creation. He is the Lord of all things, our master, our owner... and our friend.

This is who made us. This is who died for us. This is who we serve.