

The Pre-Eminence Of Christ

Colossians 1:13-20

a message by Pastor Frank Warburton

(7-21-21)

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We are continuing our study in the Book of Colossians.

The Book of Colossians is known as one of the prison epistles; meaning that they were written when Paul was imprisoned in Rome. The others are the Books of Ephesians, Philipians and Philemon.

Paul had many different reasons when writing his epistles. Encouragement; addressing a particular sin in the church; (1 & 2nd Corinthians). The Books of Ephesians and the Book of Colossians is doctrine. The Theme of the Book of Ephesians is "The Church of Christ." The doctrine taught in the Book of Colossians is Christ, the Head of the Church. This Epistle will focus primarily on the doctrine of the Deity of JESUS CHRIST.

From last time Paul encouraged the Church in Colossae to continue as they had learned from Epaphras, " as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf." [Colossians 1:7](#) Paul was encouraging the current church leaders to raise up and to be "faithful ministers of JESUS CHRIST and the Gospel."

Paul described Epaphras as a dear fellow servant and a faithful minister of CHRIST. This means that Epaphras was faithful in sharing the Gospel. Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians, because there were other groups who were attacking the Gospel and trying to pollute the church in Colossae.

A faithful minister is one who is not ashamed of the Gospel. The following passages are descriptions of the traits of a faithful minister.

[Romans 1:16](#) (NKJV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

[2 Timothy 1:8](#) (NKJV)

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

[1 Corinthians 1:18](#) (NKJV)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

These are the marks of “faithful ministers.” Paul encouraged the leaders at the Church of Colossae to raise up and train faithful ministers of the Gospel. Turn to [Acts 20](#) starting in verse 28, briefly. He warned:

Acts 20:28-31

28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

The role of the Shepherd or Pastor of the Church, is to WATCH and WARN. Something struck me when I heard Don Veinot teach recently at an Apologetics Conference here locally in Illinois about the Enneagram. If you do not what this is check out the Guest Speakers at our website the previous two Sundays. What struck me was that if other Pastors faithfully taught the WORD of GOD, and encouraged their flocks to read and study the Bible. Garbage like this and other false teachings could find no foothold or home in the Church. AMEN?!!!

Paul’s reason for writing Colossians was to deal with false teaching that was creeping into the Church at Colossae. What we will see as Paul addresses these heresies is that he was using the terms and language of the false teachers, but using the correct Biblical definitions. As we get into this shortly, tonight; the false teachings that Paul dealt with in his day; are the false teachings that are present in our day. As it is written in [Ecclesiastes 1:9](#), “And there is nothing new under the sun.”

As we get into conversations with false teachers who knock on our doors; or are members of our family or people we work with; it is important to remember two things.

1. The person we are talking to is NOT the enemy. They are deceived and blinded to the ways of GOD as we once were and we need to pray for them. It is not about winning the argument; but prayerfully winning the soul.

"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” [Acts 26:18](#)

2. That we need to define terms when talking with people. There is a lot of “Christianese” out there, but the words may not mean the same as the Biblical definition. This is a practice that in light of the current events of our day; we need to apply as well. That is all I am going to say about this last sentence in this setting.

Colossians 1:9-12

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in

the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

I just want to comment on a couple things here before we get into the heart of our study tonight. In verse 9 when Paul mentioned that he was praying for the believers in Colossae. Last time we were in Colossians; I felt the the LORD wants us to pray for one another and to pray for the Pastors of our church; that we would be faithful ministers of JESUS CHRIST AND his Gospel.

I just wanted to add; Do you know that JESUS is praying for you, right now. No matter what you are facing; JESUS is interceding for your behalf to the Father. Keep your finger here and turn to John 17.

John 17:9-11, 15, 20-21

9 “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

JESUS is praying that there would be unity in HIS church of true believers. HE is praying that GOD the FATHER would protect and keep those who are HIS followers. Whatever you are facing, JESUS does not pray necessarily that we would be taken out of the world or our problem, but that we would not succumb to the evil one, Satan. HE promises that HE will be with us in our trials to bring glory to the Father.

Also the HOLY SPIRIT is interceding for us also. Turn to Romans Chapter 8. We will read verses 26 and 27. When we are praying for an unsaved loved one; or a wayward child or strength in a prolonged illness,

“26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

So when you come to the end of your rope as you are praying for your unsaved spouse; the wayward child or the prolonged illness and you don't know what to pray... Sometimes it is only a sigh or a groan because we have been praying for so long; that we do not know what to pray any longer. The HOLY SPIRIT takes those sighs and groans and intercedes what needs to be prayed before the Father.

Colossians 1:10

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

For examples of what it means to “walk worthy of the LORD,” listen to the previous study in Colossians.

For us as Bible Believing Christians how do we increase in the “knowledge of GOD?” We study and read the Bible. We have fellowship with HIM, through prayer as we desire to know HIM better. But that is not what the false teachers in Paul’s day were doing. These false teachers were involved in something called Gnosticism.

GNOSTICISM

A variety of second-century AD religions whose participants believed that people could only be saved through revealed knowledge, or γνῶσις (gnōsis). Gnostics also held a negative view of the physical or material world.

Gnosis in the Greek, means knowledge. The Gnostics believed that to get to GOD you had to be privy to only the special knowledge they had. and that GOD only spoke to their specific group. Contrast this with Biblical Christianity, where GOD can speak to each of you directly and personally through HIS WORD. For these false teachers, the Bible is not enough; nor sufficient for you to know what GOD has said. When we get a little further into tonight’s study there is a second heresy will look at called Arianism.

Some examples; The Mormons teach that along with the Bible, and only the King James version translated by Joseph Smith; who is the founder of Mormonism; you need to read the Book of Mormon and the other Mormon Books. These are: “The Pearl of Great Price;” “Doctrines and Covenants.”

For the Jehovah’s Witnesses or JW’s the Bible is not sufficient. The JW’s will only read the perversion of the Bible put out by the Watchtower and Bible Tract Society (WTBTS or Watchtower.) which is known as the “New World Translation.” But even this is not sufficient because “GOD” can also impart knowledge through their other publications. These would be “The Watchtower” and “Awake” magazines published also by the Watchtower

In Islam, the Bible is not read because they have the teachings of Mohammed in the “Koran” and the “Hadiths..” The Hadiths are the oral traditions of early Islam. The Muslims also believe that the “Bible has been corrupted.

Colossians 1:13-20 (NKJV)

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of

the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Who is the HE at the start of verse 13?

GOD the Father. What did HE deliver us from? the power of darkness.

Before we repented as Christians and were born again, we were enemies with GOD.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Like Paul the Apostle in the Book of Acts. We could not see clearly for the “scales” that covered our eyes. and as JESUS appeared to him on the Road to Damascus in Acts 26:18 we read, JESUS’s words to Paul, when Paul was commissioned for his Ministry

Acts 26:18

18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

Our loved ones who are lost have been taken captive by the devil as we once were as well. But the HOLY SPIRIT can open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light.

In Colossians 1:13 the word conveyed in the King James version is “translated.” The Greek word for translated is methistemi (meth-is-tay-mee.) This word means to transpose, transfer, remove from one place to another. What an accurate description of what he did for us.

The praise SON of HIS love literally means a term of endearment; like a pet name you have for someone you love. (literally Dear SON).

I think it also conveys GOD the FATHER’s love for us.

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

and JESUS, GOD the son’s love for us.

John 15:13

13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Colossians 1:13-14

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

REDEMPTION

The release of people, animals, or property from bondage through the payment of a price.

Throughout the scriptures starting in Genesis through Revelation God has established the sin has consequences. Disobedience to HIS law separates one from GOD. GOD is HOLY and can not have any sin in his presence. When our parents; Adam and Eve broke the only commandment that GOD gave them. GOD told Adam that he could eat of any tree in the Garden of Eden EXCEPT for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In fact it tells us the GOD clothed Adam and Eve.

In Exodus we see GOD command that the Blood of a Lamb was to be applied to the door posts and lintel of the house or the first born male would die. . Those who by faith obeyed were saved. For those who did not obey; the first born male of the family was killed.

In Leviticus the Law was instituted among the Jewish people. The LORD prescribed a way for the people to bring an offering for their sins. Depending on the wealth of a person; GOD prescribed that the offering would a bull; a lamb or a turtledove. This was to show that redemption was open to all people regardless of income. The priest would offer for atonement. The reason for this is seen in Leviticus 5:12-13

Leviticus 5:12-13

12 Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. It is a sin offering. 13 The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him.

The Hebrew word for atonement in verse 13 is kaphar (kaw-far) and it means to cover or purge, make atonement.

The LORD established the day of Atonement; called Yom Kippur. The High Priest would select two almost identical goats. Lots would be drawn; one which said “To the LORD” and the other lot said; “To Azazel”.

The goat that got the lot labeled to the LORD, was sacrificed. The goat that got the lot “To Azazel” became in our language the scapegoat. This goat Aaron or the High Priest who came after him and so on, would lay his hands on the goat and confess the sins of the nation. This goat was then let go into the wilderness; where they believed that the goat would wander off and fall to its death in this rocky ravine, Azazel.

Hebrews 9:22

22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

But this “covering” could not be permanent. Turn a page or two to Hebrews 10

Hebrews 10

10 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

GOD’s plan was that the animal sacrifices would be a model for the ultimate fulfillment in JESUS, the “Lamb of GOD who takes away the sins of the world.”

GOD also established in the law the concept of the ga-al or the kinsman-redeemer.

(Explain the role of the kinsman redeemer) Also look this week at the Book of Ruth which is the model of the kinsman redeemer.

JESUS is our ga-al or kinsman redeemer. HE is a close relative of Adam and as GOD the SON, HE was the only one who could faithfully keep GOD’s law to redeem us.

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

When you look into your mirror in the morning; you are looking at “your image.” The mirror is not you; it is merely reflecting who you are. Here JESUS is described as the image of the invisible GOD. The Greek word is eikon (i-kone) which means an image or figure or likeness. This word is used to describe JESUS and HIS divine nature. Another reference to JESUS being GOD.

Here is where the second heresy Paul was writing against comes in; Arianism.

ARIANISM A movement in the early church that distinguished the divinity of God the Father from the divinity of Christ by arguing that Jesus was a created being. The movement derived from the teachings of Arius. In the early fourth century ad, the church was still debating the nature of Christ and his relationship to God the Father. Arius taught that Christ was a created being—the first one created by God the Father. This view made Christ subordinate to the Father and set off what is often called the “Arian controversy.”

You will have people knock on your door on Saturdays from the WTBTs who if ask that JESUS is GOD will point to this verse to defend that JESUS is not GOD, that HE is a created being, “the firstborn over all creation.”

We will get into this too deeply tonight. Perhaps the next time we study Colossians we take a detour and look at Gnosticism and Arianism in greater detail .

CONTEXT CONTEXT CONTEXT. It is important to look at verses in the context that they were written in. Looking at this verse alone; JESUS is the firstborn over all creation. But does firstborn always mean firstborn.

Jeremiah 31:9

They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.

Here Ephraim one of the sons of Joseph is called God's Firstborn. But is Ephraim the firstborn son of Joseph?

In Genesis 48 we see Jacob/Israel on his deathbed. His sons are brought to him so he may give them a blessing before he dies. His second youngest son, Joseph who became Prime Minister in Egypt, brings his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to Israel to receive the blessing.

Genesis 48:12-13

12 So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth.
13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. 14 Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

The right hand would be the place of honor or prestige. Ephraim is NOT the firstborn. Ephraim being called the firstborn, meant that he would receive the greater honor.

We will see what the word firstborn really means about JESUS, shortly.

Colossians 1:16

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

In verse 16 the phrase "all things" means... Are you ready for this? It is really deep and profound. It means ALL things. Visible, so all of creation. The Earth; The Sun, Moon and stars, the sand on the beaches. and also invisible. protons; neutrons, electrons. How about Satan or Lucifer? Yes he is a created being as well. What are thrones or principalities or powers?

In Daniel 10 there is a strange illusion to this.

As Daniel 10 begins, in verse two and three we read that Daniel was fasting, praying and seeking the LORD for three weeks or twenty one days. In Verse 4 on the twenty fourth day and angel appears to

Daniel to give him a vision of what would happen to Israel in the latter days. The later days refers to possibly the end of days.

In verse 13 we read about a strange event that hindered the angel from getting his message to Daniel

Daniel 10:13, 20

13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia

20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come

Dominions, principalities and powers refer to ranks of demons and fallen angels. This passage is a good example of spiritual warfare and how to persevere. In verse 12 the angel told Daniel that the answer to his prayer was sent the minute he began to fast and pray and seek the LORD. But this angel encountered interference for twenty four days. This prince of the kingdom of Persia was strong enough to prevent the angel from getting through with the answer to Daniel's prayer. This prince and not referring to the King ruling over the nation but demonic power behind it. Persia was the world power at this time. This demonic force was so strong that Michael the Archangel had to help fight for this message to get through. When this angel left he was going to fight against the Prince of Greece which was not even a global power yet.

So some questions to ask....

- What if Daniel had stopped fasting and praying on day twenty three?
- Would the message have gotten through?

I encourage you to keep praying, no matter what you are facing.

If there was a prince of the power of Persia and Greece; is there a Prince of the Power of the United States? Iran? Russia?

Back to Colossians 1:16 The JW's in their New World Translation add a word to this verse. They add the word "other" between all and things. So it reads, "For by HIM, all "other" things were created by HIM. They add this to make JESUS look like a created being instead of being the CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. All things were created through HIM and for HIM. All things were created for HIM for HIS glory.

Colossians 1:17

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

JESUS being before all things; means before. Before time began JESUS was there. In HIM all things consist. It means that he holds all things together.

JESUS is the sustainer of the universe. Several years ago I heard during a radio news program that scientist's were looking to harness the power that holds the atom together. Because if they could harness this, it would be an inexhaustible supply of energy.

(Explain how protons and electrons work and how like charges repel and unlike charges attract and what happens normally when protons or electrons on near each other. Nuclear explosion.)

These scientists who unfortunately are probably atheists, were looking JESUS in the eye at a subatomic level. Of course JESUS power to sustain as GOD would be inexhaustible. Thankfully, he never takes a nap or forgets about holding everything together. Someday HE is going to release his grip on the atoms. 2 Peter 3: 10 and 12

2 Peter 3:10, 12

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

The heavens passing away with a great noise and being dissolved and on fire, melting with fervent heat. That will be a huge nuclear explosions. That great noise will definitely be a "BIG BANG."

Colossians 1:18

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

JESUS is the head of the body, the church is a title of authority. We as Christians are the "Body of Christ." We have different roles to fulfill and things to do as the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:3 gives us a picture of the relationship and roles between JESUS and a husband and a wife.

3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Here we see the different roles in action. Men are not better than women. Women are not less than men, but there is an authority structure. Men are the leaders in marriage and should be the leaders in their homes. JESUS is the perfect example of servanthood.

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Husbands are to be the servant leaders in our homes; being the example and point our families to JESUS.

Back to [Colossians 1:18](#)

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

JESUS is the creator of everything in the universe; including time. Here we see the word firstborn again. This time as firstborn from the dead. Was JESUS the first one resurrected from the dead? No. There were people raised from the dead during the time of Elijah and Elisha's ministries. JESUS raised Jairus daughter. Firstborn does mean numerically. And here in context we see what it means to be the firstborn over all creation and firstborn from the dead. JESUS is eminent or superior surpassing all others.

Colossians 1:19-20

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

In [Isaiah 42:8](#) GOD says about HIMSELF

I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another,
nor My praise to carved images.

GOD will not share HIS GLORY with anyone else; but in [Colossians 1:19](#) it says that it pleased the FATHER that in JESUS the fullness of the GODHEAD should dwell. This shows that JESUS and GOD the FATHER are of the same essence and nature. That both are GOD but distinct persons. Also look back to [Philippians 2:6](#) as well that JESUS being in the form of GOD did not consider it robbery to be equal with GOD.

Colossians 1:20

and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

JESUS is going to reconcile and restore all things in back to a former state of harmony as it was before the fall. Once again all things means all things, on the physical Earth and the heavens, which I think means the skies above the Earth and space. I don't think that it refers to heaven where the Throne of GOD is, because Heaven is perfect.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).