

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS • The Greatness of Jesus Christ
Lesson #2 • Colossians 1:15-23
“Christ Is, Was & Will Be...”
• H A N D O U T •

► As we open this lesson, we find that there is no other place in all of Scripture which presents a description of Christ, our Redeemer, that is more concise, more glorious, and which gives us a deeper scope of understanding than this portion of Paul's Epistle. It begins with a passage that most scholars believe is an excerpt from a hymn used in the early Church. The words describe, in magnificent terms, just what Christians understand about who Jesus Christ is, was, and will be for all eternity.

Colossians 1:15-20 • Christ 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 dominions or principalities or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Q: This passage begins with the words: Christ is the image of the invisible God. What does the word “image” represent to us?

Q: Is Paul simply saying that Jesus is like or representative of the Father?

Q: Why is Paul being so adamant about Christ being the exact image of God?

Q: What is being conveyed by describing God as “invisible?”

Q: What does this passage tell us about creation?

Q: If Jesus Christ is not a created being, how can He be the “firstborn over all creation?”

In response to this statement that All Things were Created by Jesus the Christ Scholar, David Kuzik, made a list of what he considers some of the most astounding things in creation. A few are listed below ...

1	Comets have vapor trails up to 10,000 miles long. If you could capture all of the vapor in the trail and put it in a bottle, the amount of vapor actually present in the bottle would take up less than 1 cubic inch of space.
2	Saturn's rings are 500,000 miles in circumference, but only about a foot thick.
3	If the sun were the size of a beach-ball, and you placed it on top of the Empire State Building, the nearest group of stars would be as close to the beach-ball as Australia is to the Empire State Building.
4	The earth travels around the sun about eight times the speed of a bullet fired from a gun.
5	There are more insects in one square mile of rural land than there are human beings on the entire earth.
6	A <u>single</u> human chromosome contains twenty billion bits of information. How much information is that? If written in ordinary books, in ordinary language, it would take about four thousand volumes.
7	According to Greek scholar, A.T. Robertson, the statement “all things were created” and “in Him all things hold together” carries with it the idea that it is “standing created” or “remaining created.” IOW: That means the permanence of the universe rests on Christ far more than it does on gravity. We exist in a Christ-centric universe.

Q: Why did Paul add the statement that “whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him.” Paul had already made the statement, that Jesus created it all, so why repeat it and why the reference to thrones, etc.?

Now Paul describes Christ's relationship with the Church ...

Colossians 1:18 • 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.

Q: What does it mean that Christ is the “head of the body?”

Q: Once again Christ Jesus is referred to as the “firstborn.” In this passage he is the “firstborn from among the dead.” In the prior passage, he is the “firstborn over creation.” What is the difference?

Q: Why is Jesus called the “firstborn from among the dead?” Jesus wasn't the only one raised back to life after dying and all of them experienced their resurrection before Jesus.

Colossians 1:19-20 • For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.

Q: What does it mean for God's "fullness" to dwell in Christ?

Q: What is significant about the word "dwells" which Paul uses to describe the relationship between Jesus and God?

Q: How did Jesus reconcile all things to Himself?

Genesis 3:14-19 • Then the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

Then he said to the woman, "I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you."

And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return."

Q: So, is Paul saying that everything in the universe will be reconciled to God and, in the end, all roads lead to Heaven and there won't really be an everlasting hell?

Colossians 1:21-23 • Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Q: In Greek, the word translated as "alienated" is "*apellotriomenous*." It literally means: "transferred to another owner." How does that apply to Paul saying we are "alienated from God?"

Q: What does Paul mean when he says: you were enemies in your minds?

Q: Paul introduces the Good News with the word “But ” and states we are reconciled to God by Christ's physical body. What does that mean?

Q: What is the stated “End Game” of reconciliation?

Q: What are the three contingencies necessary to accomplish this “End Game?”

▶The “End Game” will be accomplished IF:

1. [IF]

2. [IF]

3. [IF]

Q: Why would Paul say the gospel has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven? We know that has never happened, even now, so is this just hyperbole?

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Next Time ◆ Lesson #3

“The Mystery of God: Once Hidden – Now Revealed! ”

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