**The Preeminence of Christ**

**Introduction:**

Near the close of Jesus’ life, He asked a group of Pharisees this question: “What do you think about the Christ?” (Matthew 22:42) Our answer today to that question is most important. Paul, in his letter to the Christians at Colosse, answered it by saying that Christ is preeminent. He is above all and over all. Our particular text for this lesson shows in what ways Christ is preeminent and how this should change how we live.

**Text:** Colossians 1:15-18

**Theme:** The word all is used six times in our text. Christ is all we need because of who He is.

**Body:**

1. **Christ is the image of the invisible God.** Colossians 1:15a “He is the image of the invisible God,” NKJV “Image” is the exact representation [not a partial or incomplete one], “the visible expression of the invisible God.” Seeing Jesus is seeing God! (John 14:8-9) “Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, Show us the Father?’ ” NKJV Christ, being the image of God, possesses all attributes of God. By looking at Jesus’ life, we can perceive the divine nature. An image is something that is visible. Christ illuminated, brought to light, the essence of deity.
2. **Christ is the creator.** Colossians 1:15b-16 “the firstborn over all creation. 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.” NKJV “Firstborn” is a title of highest honor. It is used in this sense referring to King David in Psalm 89:27. “Also I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the Kings of the earth.” NKJV Firstborn is a rank of preeminence showing superiority and supremacy over all others. Christ possesses headship and authority over all creation because He is the creator!

* He is the agent of the creation of the physical world. (John 1:3) “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” NKJV
* He is the source of spiritual creation. (II Corinthians 5:17) “Therefore, If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. . .” NKJV This process of a new creation is seen in Romans 6:4-6. “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. NKJV James calls Christians, those who have been brought forth by the word of truth, “a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” (James 1:18) “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” NKJV Since Christ possesses authority over His creation, then we must submit to His rule. He is the only source or cause of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:9) “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,” NKJV

1. **Christ is the sustainer of all things.** Colossians 1:17 “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” NKJV

“Before” means that He has always been. (John 1:2) “He was in the beginning with God.” NKJV “Consist” means held together. (Hebrews 1:3) “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,” NKJV He upholds all things by the word of His power. He keeps the universe running, operating as it should. He controls the laws of nature and science – gravitation. He keeps planets in the correct orbit – proper distances. He controls seasons. (Genesis 8) (Genesis 8:22) “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.” NKJV He makes sure biological processes on earth operate as designed. Christ is preeminent because He is the Sustainer of all things.

1. **Christ is the head of the body, the church.** Colossians 1:18a “And He is the head of the body, the church,” NKJV

* Source of authority. (Ephesians 5:22-23) “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” NKJV He possesses the right to control the body. (Matthew 28:18) “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’ ” NKJV He controls through His Word. (Colossians 3:16-17) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” NKJV We have no right whatsoever to change His Word, His last will and testament. (Hebrews 9:16-17) “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.” NKJV
* Source of all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:3) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” NKJV As Head of the body, He is its sustainer and supplies its needs. Only by being in His body, the church, is one blessed with the forgiveness of sins. It is the only realm where sinners become righteous, where salvation is found. (II Timothy 2:10) “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” NKJV

1. **Christ has all preeminence.** Colossians 1:18b “who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” NKJV “The beginning, the firstborn from the dead. . .” He has supremacy even over death and Hades. (Revelation 1:17-18) “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid, I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” NKJV He is one who will stand in judgment over everyone. (Matthew 25:31-32) “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” NKJV He is now at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (I Peter 3:22) “who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” NKJV Since He has all preeminence that leaves none for you and me.

**Conclusion:**

What do you think about the Christ? Are you willing to place yourself under His authority and obey His Word, the word of truth? If you so choose, you will be blessed beyond belief.

Bobby Stafford November 15, 2016 Colossians: Lesson 3 Colossians 1:15-18