

Colossians 1 (15-20) – Jesus Will Have The Last Word

People all over the world celebrate Christmas. And even people who might not think about Jesus all year long might have fond thoughts about Jesus at Christmastime. But the truths of who Jesus really is and why he really came are a mystery to many. But our text today clearly tells you who Jesus is and why he came, which I will explain by referring to Jesus using five words.

Jesus is GOD (vs.15, 19) – this is the first word.

He is the image of the invisible God. Vs.13-14 show that this is speaking of Jesus, the Son of God. And this term “Son” doesn’t mean some created being, or lesser person, or lesser rank. Rather, this verse is asserting his absolute deity and his exact likeness in essence to God the Father. The Son of God is God the Son, the second member of the eternal Trinity. Jesus is God come in the flesh, and “the” one and only image of the invisible God.

No one has seen God the Father. But there is an answer to the question, “What does God look like?” The answer is that he looks like Jesus, who is God in human flesh. John 1:14 and 18 say, *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known”.*

Jesus is fully God and fully man. In the Incarnation, which is what we Christians celebrate at Christmas, God the Son did not give up his deity; rather, he put on humanity. Philippians 2:6-8 says that although Jesus was God, *“he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”.*

The word “image” here in Colossians 1:15 doesn’t mean just a picture or representation of God, but rather the very essence and the manifestation of

God. Perhaps you have heard the hymn, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”, and have sung the words, “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate deity”. This is the truth! Jesus IS God!

Humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28), but even before Adam fell it was just a partial representation of God, and sin has corrupted and defiled that image. But Jesus, born without a sin nature, was the exact and perfect representation of God’s image, and nature. Hebrews 1:3 says, “*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature*”.

Jesus is not a partial or lesser deity. Look at vs.19, “*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell*”. Colossians 2:9 says, “*For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*”. All of the holiness, truth, and power of God are in the Son. He is coequal and coeternal with the Father. John 1:1-2 says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God*”.

Jesus came to be the God-man, because only the God-man could atone for our sins. To redeem a people, he had to be fully God, so as to give the atonement an infinite value. And he had to be fully man, to perfectly satisfy God’s law, thus becoming an acceptable substitute for sinners.

the firstborn of all creation – This speaks not of chronology but of covenant, of primacy, authority, privilege, inheritance. For example, Israel was called firstborn yet it was not the first nation in time (Exodus 4:22). Hebrews 1:2 says that God *has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things*. And this truth is further explained by vs.16-17. Jesus is Lord of the creation because Jesus *is the creator*.

Jesus is CREATOR (vs.16) – this is the second word.

Jesus created the entire universe, and all that is in it, for his own glory and purpose. Romans 11:36 says, “*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*” All of creation, all of the creatures, all

of the cosmos, the physical and the spiritual world, all of the orders and powers, everything that has life, everything that doesn't have life, all the material, all the immaterial, all the power, all the energy, all the everything, everything we can see and everything we cannot see, everything that exists was made out of nothing (Genesis 1:1 – *ex nihilo*) and it was made by Christ.

John 1:3 says, “*All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*”. Jesus did not create himself; he is uncreated. Jesus was the agent of creation. Again, Hebrews 1:2 says that God *has spoken to us by his Son...through whom also he created the world*. Revelation 3:14 says, “*And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation'*”. This doesn't mean that Jesus is the original creation; it means that he is the originator of creation.

Jesus is God, Jesus is the creator, and he is more than that, because Jesus also sustains his creation.

Jesus is SUSTAINER (vs.17) – this is the third word.

This word, sustainer, describes something about Jesus that is so profound, so powerful, and so important, but it is not often understood.

First, in vs.17, we read that Jesus *is before all things*, meaning that he existed before creation. In John 17:5, Jesus said, *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed*. Then we see that Jesus not only created all things, but that *in him all things hold together*. All that Jesus created he maintains. Hebrews 1:3 says *he upholds the universe by the word of his power*.

This is so powerful. In fact, it is all power. All the power there is. Nothing else has any power without Jesus. You see, Jesus didn't just create everything, and he doesn't just have dominion over everything; he is the only thing that keeps any of it in existence. “Sustainer” doesn't just mean that Jesus could wipe anything and everything out, but that he is the only

life support anything has. It isn't that things are created and then they have life by themselves, in an eternal sense, but that Jesus continues to give life to anything and everything. It is not that everything is him, or that everything has him in it, but that everything is maintained by him or it ceases to exist. The only reason that anything continues is because Jesus is making it so.

Jesus is God, Jesus is the creator, and Jesus is the sustainer. He is the Lord of all life. That's why a Christian worships Jesus as the Lord of their life.

Jesus is LORD (vs.18) – this is the fourth word.

Christ has the priority in time and power. He is *the head of the body, the church*. Ephesians 5:23 says *Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior*. Colossians 2:10 says *you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority*. Jesus is the Lord of the entire universe. Jesus is the Lord of the Church. Every part of your life is under the Lordship of Christ. All you need is flowing from him.

The *firstborn* here refers once again to primacy, not chronology, since Jesus was not the first person to rise from the dead. This is about prominence; it is not primarily about time, but rank. Still, it does refer to time, in the sense that *He is the beginning*, the first of those who will rise never to die again. Revelation 1:5 says Jesus Christ is *"the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth"*.

Jesus is also the beginning of the new creation. Romans 8:21 says *"the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God"*. Jesus is the beginning of the new creation, and he is the center of the new creation *that in everything he might be preeminent*.

The outworking of that starts with born again people, the Church. Colossians 3:11 says that in the Church *there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all*. Jesus is first in the Church, and he will be first everywhere.

Paul reinforces his point in vs.19 by stating that *in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell*. The Son is fully God. In Revelation 1:8, Jesus says *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty"*. Contrary to many false religions and cults of Christianity, Jesus claims to be and the Bible declares him to be nothing less than fully God. He is not a created being, he is not an archangel, and he is not a mere man.

By claiming to be the Son of God, the Jews of the day understood Jesus to be stating that he was indeed God. John 5:18 says, *"This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God"*. In John 8:24, Jesus said, *unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins*. In John 8:58, Jesus made it as plain as can be, and he said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* Jesus was using the very name of God, because he was saying that he IS God.

Jesus is Lord right now, and while it might not be recognized by many today, one day it will be recognized by all creatures for all eternity. You see, Jesus is God, Jesus is the creator of all creation, Jesus is the sustainer of all creation, Jesus is Lord of all creation, and Jesus will reconcile all of creation.

Jesus is RECONCILER (vs.20) – This is the fifth word.

This word describes the final outcome of history and what will happen in eternity. This last word is an incredible statement regarding the future, fully recognized Lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus will have the last word.

Through his death on the cross, Jesus brought about a dramatic change of condition and status for his people, atoning for our sins, and resolving the enmity between God and man. Look at vs.21-22. Romans 5:10 says that *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*. Jesus also reconciled the hostility between Jew and Gentile. Ephesians 2:16 says that he reconciled *us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility*.

And what's more, Jesus is redeeming creation itself. Romans 8:19-23 says that all creation will be made new. This world is broken, but the birth of Jesus brought us the hope a new creation. And in this new world there will be no sickness, or suffering, or strife, or stress, or sin (cf. Revelation 21:4).

And the cross leads to more than even that. You see the phrase *all things* twice in vs.16, twice in vs.17, here in vs.20, and you see the phrase *in everything* in vs.18. And it does mean all things, it relates to everything. Jesus made all things (vs.16), he sustains all things (vs.17), he is greater than all things (vs.18), and he is reconciling all things (vs.20).

This isn't teaching universalism, however. What this means is that through the humble obedience of Jesus unto death, everything in all of creation will acknowledge him as King of kings and Lord of lords, as God almighty who reigns forever. Philippians 2:9-11 says, "*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*".

Everything will be brought into full submission to Christ. Even though we don't see everyone bowing the knee to Jesus now, everyone is under his command even now. But then, in the end, they will do so verbally and visually. And all of the chaos and calamity in the physical and spiritual universe will be put in perfect order. It will be the most glorious day, when who Jesus is and what he has done will be fully revealed to the whole universe and everyone and everything in it.

This is why Titus 2:13 says we are *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*.

Jesus redeems his people, and he redeems creation, but not all people or angels will be redeemed in the saving sense. Everything will be reconciled in the sense that everything will be brought into its proper place, and there will be no further or future rebellion against his universal rule.

Hebrews 2:8 says that currently nothing is outside of Christ's control, but presently it doesn't appear that everything is in subjection to him. There is a lot of rebellion against Jesus, the God, creator, sustainer, and Lord of the universe. However, one day that will all change. And that day will be the judgement day. Revelation 20:10-15 says on that day, death, hell, and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire. And all those who have not received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will not be found in the book of life, and they, too, will be damned forever.

Jesus is God. Jesus is the creator, sustainer, and Lord of the universe. And Jesus is the great judge who will reconcile you one way or the other. Jesus will either reconcile you by justifying you or by judging you. Jesus will be your judge. Acts 10:42 says that Jesus will judge the living and the dead. Acts 17:31 says that we know Jesus is the judge because he rose from the dead. Romans 2:16 says that Jesus will judge the secrets of your heart.

People who might not think about Jesus all year long might have fond thoughts about Jesus at Christmastime. But there will come a time when every person will meet him face to face. And in the end, there will be no atheists or agnostics or wishful thinkers or deniers of Christ. Everyone will know exactly who Jesus is, and everything that has life will fully acknowledge his absolute authority, majesty, and power. Everyone will bow the knee to the real Jesus.

The question is when will you do it? Will you bow the knee to the Lord of glory now, and joyfully experience who Jesus is on that great day? Or will you refuse to bow the knee now, and dreadfully acknowledge and experience who Jesus is on that great day?

You've seen what the Bible says about who Jesus is and why he came. Jesus is God, Jesus is the creator of all creation, Jesus is the sustainer of all creation, Jesus is Lord of all creation, and Jesus will reconcile all of creation. Now, in this life, the choice to believe or not is yours. But remember this; in eternity, and for eternity, Jesus will have the last word.