

Colossians 1:15-23

A portrait of Christ...white, blond haired, blue eyed, Jesus that permeates all of the paintings OR we can have a portrait painted for us ***by the breath of God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit***...and that is what we have in Colossians 1. Listen, as we read, for how He is described in this text. Each of these descriptors is like a “brush stroke” in the portrait. READ

1. The image of the invisible God v15a
2. The firstborn of all creation v15b
3. The creator of all creation v16
4. The sustainer of all creation v17
5. The head of the church v18a
6. The firstborn from the dead v18b
7. The reconciler v19-23

PRAY

The latter part of verse 18 is the canvas that all of these brush strokes rest on.

1. NIV—so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
2. ESV—that in everything he might be preeminent.
3. NASB—so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

I. First in all Creation v15-17 (one side of the canvas)

1. The image of the invisible God v15a (brush stroke 1)

- a. If God the Father were to stand before a mirror, the mirror would reflect Christ.
- b. If the Father were to be pressed into a lump of clay, the mold would be Jesus.

John 14:9 *Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Hebrews 1:3 *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.*

Colossians 2:9 *For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form*

- c. The Father is not the image of the Son. The Son is the image of the Father...the revealer.
- d. John 1:18 *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*
- e. *God is revealed to us in Christ alone. We must, therefore, beware of seeking him elsewhere, for everything that would set itself off as a representation of God, apart from Christ, will be an idol.* John Calvin

2. **The firstborn of all creation** v15b (brush stroke 2)

- a. Let us not read this verse and think that Jesus has a beginning.
- b. He no more has a beginning than the Father does. He is eternal.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

- c. He does not have a beginning, but He does have a source.
 - 1. He comes from the Father...and not vice versa.
 - 2. He is begotten by the Father.

- d. He comes from Him like a reflection in a mirror comes from the man in the mirror.

3. **The creator of all creation** v16 (brush stroke 3)

John 1:1-3 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

4. **The sustainer of all creation** v17 (brush stroke 4)

Hebrews 1:3 *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.*

II. First in all the Church v18-20 (the other side of the canvas)

1. **The head of the church** v18a (brush stroke 1)

- a. Ephesians 1:22 *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church*
- b. *It is Christ that alone has authority to govern the Church, that it is he to whom alone believers ought to have an eye, and on whom alone the unity of the body depends.* Calvin
- c. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27

2. **The firstborn from the dead** v18b (brush stroke 2)

1 Cor 15:20-27

3. **The reconciler** v20 (brush stroke 3)

To reconcile means to take 2 enemies and bring peace between them.

1. We are enemies of God...born children of wrath v21

- a. **Alienated**—estranged from God, a stranger to God.
- b. **Hostile in Mind**—not merely alienated, but hostile. Enemies.
- c. **Doing Evil Deeds**—Our alienation and hostility show themselves in wicked works.

2. There is nothing that we can do to correct the problem God has with us.

3. So, Christ has come to reconcile us...to make peace v22a

4. The Greek implies that we are totally and forever reconciled and at peace with God

5. But now that He has reconciled you, you are v22b

- a. **Holy**—separated from sin and set apart to God.
- b. **Blameless**— without blemish.
- c. **Above Reproach**—uncharged.

1. Not only are we seen as holy and blameless, but no one can even bring a charge against us.

2. Romans 8:31-34 *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

6. He is the reconciler

2 Cor 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Conclusion:

Do you realize that you are going to stand before God one day...maybe even today. And the only thing that will matter...the one thing above all things...will be “have you been reconciled to God through Christ?”

1. Are you an enemy of God, a child of wrath?
2. Are you alienated from God, hostile in mind, and a doer of evil deeds?
3. Or are you holy, blameless, and above reproach?
4. Do you have peace with God through Christ?

The only way you can have any confidence that you have been reconciled to God is if you continue in the faith. v23

1. According to Verse 22, they had been reconciled to God.
2. It was done...but then he adds.... “if indeed” v23

If they had been reconciled by the death of Christ already (as v22 says), then their reconciliation could not depend on anything subsequent to His death, burial, and resurrection.

1. If their reconciliation depended upon their continuing, then verse 22 is just “talk”
2. But if their continuing depended upon their reconciliation, then verse 22 is the power

• Continuing in the faith is here spoken of as the proof of what is past, NOT as the condition of what is future.

1. Continuing doesn't provide us security...our security produces continuing.
 - a. If we have been reconciled by the reconciler, the firstborn from the dead, the head of the church, the creator and sustainer, the very image of God...we continue in the faith!
 - b. And our perseverance in the faith produces transformation and proves we are secure.
2. This is what faith is
 - a. Believing what God has declared
 - b. Pursuing what God has declared about us on a practical level...being transformed.

3. And our transformation gives us an eternal hope...which takes us back to verses 3-5
 - a. We are reconciled by faith...and by faith we act based upon what God has said
 - b. And by our actions we prove our security.
 - c. And as we dwell secure here, we increase our hope in eternity
 - d. 1 Peter 1:4-5 *to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*