

Colossians 1:15-23

If you are a guest this morning, we are glad that you have chosen to worship with us at First Baptist. We have been slowly making our way through the book of Colossians over the past several weeks. The title of our series is simply, The Christ. The theme of this letter is clearly Jesus, and that is made abundantly clear in our text this morning.

In Colossians 1:15-23, we see several truths about Jesus. We see that He is...

1. The image of the invisible God.
2. The firstborn of creation
3. The creator
4. The sustainer
5. The head of the church
6. The firstborn from the dead
7. The pre-eminent one
8. The Reconciler

Listen to what Paul writes.

READ/PRAY

Paul describes the person of Christ in at least 8 ways in these verses. As we said, He is described as...

1. The image of the invisible God.
2. The firstborn of creation
3. The creator
4. The sustainer
5. The head of the church
6. The firstborn from the dead
7. The pre-eminent one
8. The Reconciler

I think we can summarize these 8 descriptors under two headings in an effort to simplify: Creator (v15-17) and Savior (v18-23).

I. Creator v15-17

V15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

At first glance, we might think that Jesus had a beginning.

1. As though He were created
2. As though He were part of creation
3. Maybe even that He came into existence at His Nativity.

Let us not read this verse and think that Jesus has a beginning.

1. He no more has a beginning than the Father does.
 - a. He is eternal.
 - b. Philippians 2:5-8 *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being*

found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

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

2. Jesus does not have a beginning, but He does have a source.
 - a. He comes from the Father...and not vice versa.
 - b. He is begotten by the Father...not as a biological son, but as coming from!
3. He is the image of the invisible God
 - a. God is invisible
 - b. If God the Father were to stand before a mirror, the mirror would reflect Christ.
 - c. If the Father were to be pressed into a lump of clay, the imprint He would leave would be Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4:4 *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

1. The Father is not the image of the Son. The Son is the image of the Father...the revealer.
2. 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.*
3. This does not refer as much to looks, as much as character.
4. Colossians 2:9 *For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form*

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'?"*

So why would Paul say that He is the 1st born of creation...if he was not born or created? Read on!

16 For...

That word "for" let's us know that Paul was not finished with his thought and explanation...

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him (or because of Him) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

He is the image of the Father...coming from the Father...created all things.

1. Genesis 1
2. 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.*

17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

1. He is not only the visible reflection of the Father who also created all things...He sustains it all as well.
2. 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. Savior v18-23

18 He is also head of the body, the church

1. The church, the body of Christ, is made up of many parts, each with its own function and gifts, but they all have one head: Jesus Christ.
2. Ephesians 1:22 *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church*

and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,

1 Cor 15:20-25 *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.*

so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

1. NIV—so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
2. ESV—that in everything he might be preeminent.

19 For....

There is that word For again...Paul is bringing his thoughts together now.

v19-20 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

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

1. He has reconciled all things to Himself
2. He has made peace...how? Through the blood of the cross.
3. 1 Peter 1:18-19 *knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

To reconcile means to take 2 enemies and bring peace between them. We are enemies of God

v21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

a. Alienated

1. That word alienated means estranged from God, a stranger to God.
2. Ephesians 2:12 *remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

b. Hostile in Mind

1. We are not only alienated, but hostile.
2. Literally, enemies.
3. The word could be defined as someone openly hostile, characterized by deep-seated hatred.
4. The word implies irreconcilable hostility, proceeding out of a "personal" hatred bent on inflicting harm.
5. This is us! Not me...that is how the Bible describes you.

c. Doing Evil Deeds

1. Our alienation and hostility show themselves in wicked works.
2. Romans 3:12 tells us that there is NONE who does good, there is not even one

But now that He has reconciled you, you are

v22-23 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

What a change of circumstance and position.

1. From alienated (separated from God) to **Holy** (separated from sin!)
2. From hostile and deep seated hatred to **blameless**...without blemish.
3. From doing evil deeds to being **above reproach**...uncharged...no condemnation.

How can this be? The Savior...the reconciler.

1. Do you know Him?
2. Have you been reconciled?
3. THE GOSPEL