
COLOSSIANS: CHRIST PREEMINENT

Session 4 | Colossians 1:14-21 | Dr. Randy White

Celebrating the Son | Colossians 1:14-19

- Celebration #1: Redemption through His blood | v. 14
 - **Redemption** - The root word λύτρον [*lutron*] is the actual payment (or ransom) and ἀπολύτρωσις [*apolutrosis*] is the freedom, redemption or release that that payment brings.
 - Only the KJV and NKJV include the words, "through his blood." The almost exact wording is found in Ephesians 1:7.
 - **The forgiveness of sins** is equated to be the same as "the redemption."
- Celebration #2: Christ's identity | v. 15a
 - He is the **image of the invisible God**.
 - The word **image** is εἰκών [*eikon*] from which we get icon.
 - Notice that Jesus is **NOT the invisible God**.
 - Similarly, Hebrews 1:2 calls Him "the brightness of His glory."
 - That is, there is a difference between the Father and the Son.
 - Good Trinitarian theology is essential to Biblical Christianity.
 - Also note that **the image** is far different than "the shadow."
 - In Heb 10:1, the Law was a **shadow** and not **the image**.
 - So, we have a shadow, an image (visible manifestation) and the substance itself.
 - Note that Jesus is not only the **image of the invisible God**, but He is the *only* image (John 1:18).
- Celebration #3: Christ's position | v. 15b-16
 - The third characteristic of the Son is His preeminence over all creation.
 - He is *born* in that He took on human flesh. This does not imply a *beginning point* for the second person of the Trinity.
 - **Firstborn** is often more of a title than a description.
 - Verse 16 gives the evidence of Christ's position as **firstborn**.
- Celebration #4: Christ's consisting work | v. 17
 - The Greek συνίστημι [*sunhistemi*] is *sun* (together) and *histemi* (stand).
 - In Christ, all things **consist**.
 - The English **consist** comes from the Latin *consistere*, which is *con* (with) and *sistere* (stand).
 - Thus the English comes from the Latin which comes from the Greek. In Him all things "stand together" or "hold together."
 - Even if we can split the *atom* (which was named before the time that science discovered that that which "cannot be cut" (the meaning of *atom*), we do not need to worry about the created world falling apart. Christ holds it together, and is faithful even when we are not. Compare Hebrews 1:3.
- Celebration #5: Christ's headship over the church | v. 18a

- Only in the epistles does one find a "body of Christ," which is the proper spiritual definition of the church.
- To become part of the body of Christ we are "baptized into His death" (Romans 6:3).
- The body of Christ and the visible church are not the same.
- Celebration #6: Christ's priority | v. 18b
 - The sixth characteristic is the word ἀρχή [*arche*] from which we get *architect* and *monarch* - words which have to do with **beginning**.
- Celebration #7: Christ's resurrection | v. 18c-19
 - The seventh characteristic is a reference to His resurrection.
 - His resurrection is the ultimate (and sufficient) reason to give Christ the **preeminence** or "first place."
 - His resurrection resulted in **the fullness** dwelling in Christ.
 - Note that ***the Father*** is italicized. While this may be true, the text literally says, "all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him."
 - Since there is clear terminology speaking of "the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19) and "the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13), it is inappropriate to assume such terminology here.
 - The **fullness** is the subject and "was pleased to dwell" is the verb, "in Him" is the indirect object.
 - Here **fullness** takes on almost "personhood" characteristics, thus the translators want to make it the fullness of the Father, or God's fullness (ESV).

Reconciliation by Christ | Colossians 1:20-21

- Verse 19 –
 - The New Testament presents reconciliation as a complete and completed work of Christ by the Cross.
 - On several occasions it is noted that **all things** have been reconciled. See 2 Cor 5:17 for an example.
 - While some (especially within Calvinism) are reluctant to take **all things** to mean **all things** in v. 20, they must recognize that to reject the completeness of the term in v. 20 requires a rejection of a completeness of the exact term in vv. 16 and 17.
 - This view requires that we theologically separate reconciliation from salvation.
 - Reconciliation is used of **things**, including inanimate things which cannot be saved.
 - For humanity, Christ has provided the "balance adjustment entry" so that salvation is possible for those who would receive it, by grace through faith.
 - Reconciliation is accomplished **by Him** and only available through Him. Without Him, we never become recipients of this reconciliation.
- Verse 21 –
 - This is an elaboration on the **all things** of v. 20. This verse makes it personal. The thought continues in v. 22.