

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF COLLOSSIANS

Understanding Jesus



WEEK 3 STUDY GUIDE

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Monday, January 23, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:15-23

Scripture Verse: *"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;" Colossians 1:15*

Today's Thought:

In this verse we are going to examine the superiority of Jesus Christ over all things. To fully understand verse 15, let's go back to the introduction to the epistle. We have said that the apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Colossians to combat the heresy which raged in the church. Christians were confused about angels; they did not understand the concept of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote them to warn them against the teachings of the Gnostics. Paul wrote to Christians to make them understand that Christ is not only the Savior, but he is also the master and ruler of the cosmos by whom the whole universe is maintained in existence. Since the Christians in Colossae had some confusion about the deity of Jesus Christ due to the false teachings of the Gnostics, he decided to correct the problem once and for all by presenting Jesus Christ as equal to the Father.

He presented Christ as the perfect image of God. To show that, by accepting Christ as the only Savior, man regained his identity lost in Adam after his fall. In Genesis 1:26-28 we see that God created man in his own image and likeness. However, because of man's disobedience, the image of God in man has been distorted, deteriorated. We read in Romans 5:12 "Therefore, as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death came to all peoples, because all sinned." Paul presents Christ as the perfect image of God, the one through whom we should be saved. He presents Christ as the incarnate God, the Supreme God who took human form for our salvation. Christ is the one through whom God reveals himself to create closeness between him and man. To know God better, man must pass only through Christ. Whoever accepts Christ into his life accepts God because he is his image, the radiance of his glory. We read in Hebrews 1:3 "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Christ is not comparable to any creature, to any living being, or to angels. His name is above all names. Paul also declares that he is the first-

born of all creation. This implies Christ is first and has preeminence over all that exists. Verse 16 has explained it so well. Speaking of the firstborn of all creation, someone said, "When Jesus enters creation, it is to be there as the center and head of all things. He cannot occupy any other place. He says of himself that he is "the firstborn of all creation." It is a kinship name expressing his supremacy over all that has been created. There is no question of time, as if the apostle would have wanted to say that he was in date the first of creatures, is an expression analogous to that which God uses to show the excellence of Solomon above the other kings: "I will make him the first- born, the highest of the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:28).

So, no one has ever seen God, but Jesus, the reflection of his glory and the footprint of his person, makes him known to us. To know God, to have an intimate relationship with him, we must pass through Jesus Christ, the only Savior, the Master and the ruler of the cosmos by whom the whole universe is maintained in existence.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for revealing yourself to me in all your splendor in your Son Jesus Christ. Accepting him into my life as Lord is also accepting you as my Savior. Thank you for dispelling any doubt, any confusion about the divinity of Jesus. Lord, thank you for having taken human form to give me back my old identity lost in Adam after his fall. Let every knee bow in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- How can man find his old identity lost in Adam?
- How did Paul introduce Jesus Christ?
- What did God do to save man?
- What does "The firstborn of all creation" mean?

Further Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:15–23

Scripture Verse: *“For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him;” Colossians 1:16*

Today’s Thought:

In verse 15 we saw that Jesus is the image of the invisible God and that he is the supreme God. Verse 16 emphasizes Jesus’ omnipotence over all that exists. The verse tells us that he himself is the Master of creation. That he is the supreme creator. It all started in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul made it clear to say the visible things and the invisible things that are in the heavens were created by Jesus. Those we can see with the naked eye in the heavens and those beyond human understanding in the heavens are the work of Jesus Christ.

The apostle does not stop there, he also speaks of the visible and invisible things on earth which are the work of Jesus Christ. If everything was created by him, he himself cannot have been created as some would have tried to believe. Jesus is the master of creation; he has absolute superiority over everything he created. In some ways, the work is no greater than the one who created it. Jesus is superior to all creation over which he reigns. Concerning the false teachers who taught the church about the superiority of angels over Jesus, Paul reminded Christians that Jesus is without equal, and that he himself is the creator and head of all that exists, including the angels. Thrones, dignities, dominions, authorities were all created by and for Jesus. Giving more importance to the creation than to the creator is idolatry and it is a serious offense to the creator.

So, we don’t have to travel a thousand ways to find God. Jesus is the one and only way to build a good relationship with God. Jesus is the supreme author of all things, and he upholds all things with his powerful word because he himself is the word incarnate. “In the beginning was the word, the word was with God and the word was God.” John 1:1. God reveals himself to us in all his splendor in his Son Jesus Christ to save us. He himself is God manifested in the flesh. We read in 1 Timothy 3:16 “Without doubt great is the mystery out of which true godliness springs: He appeared in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was

preached among the nations, was believed in the world, was taken up into glory." Jesus showed men the character of God. Therefore, whoever knows Christ has also known the Father because he is God manifested in the flesh. He is the creator, the absolute intelligence and the supreme master of all that exists. "For from him, by him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever." Amen! Romans 11:36

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are the Master of the creation and the Lord of my life. I believe that you rule over everything, you control everything, and you are the head of everything. Thank you for showing me the characters of God. Thank you for what you have done for me on the cross. You took my place, you paid for my sins, you redeemed me. So, you have done for me what I could never afford. Thank you for this great love! I yield my will to yours. I respond in obedience to your word, make me your own vessel and use me according to your will.

- Who is Jesus?
- Could you mention something that Jesus created?
- Who upholds all things with his mighty word?
- To obey him, what must be done?

Further Reading: Psalms 8:1-10

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:15–23

Scripture Verse: *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18*

Today’s Thought:

In the previous verses we have seen Jesus in creation, and that he is the master of creation. Everything was done by him and for him, that he is the supreme God. Now in verse 18 we see that he is the supreme head of the church. What is the Church? Church comes from the Greek word “ekklesia”, meaning “assembly” or “those who are called”. The word (ecclesia) used in the New Testament for the church refers to a group of people who were summoned for a purpose. The Church, originally, did not designate a building, but individuals. Ultimately, there can only be one Church (1Cor 12:13, Eph 4:4-5). “The Universal Church” is the body of believers in Jesus Christ, living and dead, of all tribe, language, age, people and nation. Jesus is the master of this Church. He himself said in Matthew 16:18 after Peter’s statement, “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not overcome it.”

The church or Christians are the private property of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the messenger of God to save men. He is the high priest who gave his life as a ransom for his church. He is the savior of his church. He is the ultimate healer and great soul medicine of his church. Without Jesus the church does not exist. Christ is the cornerstone of his church. We read in 1 Peter 2:6 “For in the scripture it is said, ‘Behold, I am laying a stone unto Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and he who trusts in him shall never be put to shame.’ Jesus is the Supreme Head on whom the Church is built. He is the cornerstone. In a building, once the cornerstone is laid, it becomes the basis for determining all the measurements of the rest of the building; everything is aligned with it.

As the cornerstone of the Church, Jesus is our standard of measure and alignment. He is our model of love, peace, faith and holiness. “In him we are living stones chosen and precious before God to form a spiritual house. But chosen of God and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:4-5. We have become the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16),

so we must remain pure and holy in our conduct (1 Peter 1:15). As the body of Christ, we must put Him first in everything. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercy of God, to offer up your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God – this is your true and proper worship." Romans 12:1

Thank you, Jesus, for you are the head of the Church. As much as you are alive, your Church will always be alive and the gates of Hades will not overcome it, because you are the builder. I am yours; I will never be ashamed. You are my standard of measurement and alignment. You are my model of love, peace, faith and holiness. As a spiritual house, help me to live in holiness. I offer my life to you as a living, holy and pleasing sacrifice. Please receive it.

- Who is the head of the Church?
- What does "ekklesia" mean?
- How does Peter describe Jesus in 1 Peter 2:6?
- How should our life relate to Jesus?

Further Reading: Ephesians 1: 20–23

Thursday, January 26, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:15–23

Scripture Verse: *“And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unproveable before him:” Colossians 1:21–22*

Today’s Thought:

Reading this verse, I remember a brand-new laptop 21 years ago that someone gave me as a gift. I didn’t know if I should protect my laptop; after several years of use it caught a nasty virus that messed up the entire operating system and even attacked the hard drive of the laptop. On the other hand, I was worried about what had happened to my laptop and my college papers. I was worried about what was going to happen, I thought I was going to lose my laptop and everything on it. I complained, I explained the situation to a friend who was a computer repairman, I gave him the laptop. Without wasting time, he saved my important documents, he reformatted the laptop, he installed a new operating version and accompanied it with a high-performance antivirus; in the end, he handed me the laptop in perfect condition. So, I couldn’t find words to thank him for handing me, I would say, a new laptop. I was happy with his work!

This story reminds me of exactly what Jesus did for us on the cross after man’s disobedience. God created us in his image. After having created man, he contemplated his creation, he saw that everything was very good. “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good...” Genesis 1:31. But man in his disobedience has harmed the work of God. Man’s disobedience brought sin into the world. Since then, this virus of sin has made man very vulnerable to evil and this has resulted in the spiritual and physical death of man. We read: “Therefore, as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death came to all men, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12. Sin has distorted our God-given identity of creation. Satan injected us with the venom of evil, he distanced us from God. We were afraid of the presence of God. The devil opened our eyes to evil and made us the enemy of God.

Like my old laptop, which was contaminated, infected by a nasty virus which had messed it up, sin has deformed us and installed in our minds the version of evil which consists of: “sexual immorality, impurity and

debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, etc." Galatians 5:19-21. But God in his love sought us out and saved us through his Son Jesus Christ. "Now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13. God reconciled us to himself through his Son Jesus Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. God in his Son Jesus installed in us a new version with a high-capacity antivirus able to destroy all the viruses that the enemy would have tried to inject into us.

Brothers and sisters, "You were also included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were sealed in him, the Holy Spirit promised." Ephesians 1:13. Christ has repaired us and presented us to God holy and blameless. Then, you don't like this new version! Aren't you proud of this new version? Are you not happy and satisfied with this grace?

Heavenly Father, how can I thank you for everything you have done for me! I was lost, strayed from your presence because of this deadly venom that the devil injected into me. Thank you for formatting me, thanks to your Son Jesus Christ who died for me on the cross. I am reconciled to you through your Son Jesus Christ who gave me the ministry of reconciliation. He installed in me a new version with a high-capacity antivirus able to destroy all the viruses that the enemy would have tried to inject into me.

- What happened with my laptop?
- What was I doing with my laptop?
- Compared to my old laptop, what has the devil injected into us?
- What did Jesus do for us on the cross?
- Are you proud of this new version?
- What should your attitude be?

Further Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Friday, January 27, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:15–23

Scripture Verse: *“Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unproveable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.” Colossians 1:22–23*

Today’s Thought:

We saw that God in his Son Jesus saved us and installed in us a new version with a high-capacity antivirus capable of destroying all the viruses that the enemy would have tried to inject into us. The new operational version that God has put in us is his word. We are now reconciled, and, enjoying the benefits of this reconciliation, we expect to meet again in heaven as God wills. The word of God is our guide, our compass, the light that enlightens us. Christ by his death on the cross saved us and presented us before God without reproach; however, being a saved person, a holy nation, an acquired people, a royal priesthood, we must remain anchored in the word and steadfast in the faith in Jesus Christ.

The word of God must be the object of our thought day and night, it is this which will prevent us from turning neither to the left nor to the right. The knowledge and practice of the word can help us to have our eyes fixed on Jesus and is capable of helping us to succeed in our undertakings. Do you remember what Joshua said to God’s people? “Keep this book of the law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may see to it that you do all that is written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua 1:8. Our success in God and in all that we do depends on the importance we give to the word of God.

A house without a good foundation cannot withstand wind and bad weather. Likewise, the Christian must be anchored in the word to resist the false doctrines, the problems and the persecutions of all kinds that he will have to face. We not only have the word of God as a new version in us, but there is also the Holy Spirit as an antivirus whom he has installed in us. We read, “...When you believed, you were sealed in him, the promised Holy Spirit.” Ephesians 1:13. He put in us the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who leads us into truth. (John 16:13). He is our defender, our adviser, our healer and protector. He is our Supreme Guide, who walks

before us, shows us the way, sweeps away obstacles, opens our minds and enlightens us on all things. He is our comforter who dwells eternally in us. (John 14:16). He is our teacher. He will remind us of the truth (John 14:26), confirm, guarantee and testify that we are children of God. His presence in us allows us to understand and interpret the word of God.

My brothers and sisters, may he who has the power to keep you unflinching, and to place you blameless before his glory with abundance of joy, grant you grace and protect you from all the fiery arrows of the enemy.

- In what sense do we consider the word of God as a new operational version in us?
- What are the roles of the word of God in us?
- What will enable us to resist false teachers?
- In what sense do we see the Holy Spirit as an antivirus in us?
- What are his responsibilities?

Further Reading: John 15:5-7, Hebrews 12:1-3

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." Psalms 122:1

Oh look! Today is Friday! Saturday and Sunday are coming! Do not miss your appointment with your Lord in his house!

NOTES



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