

Col Ch 1 Vs 13-18

The Preeminent Person of Christ

Every year we as a nation set aside a certain day whereby the intention is set to be the offering up of thanks to God. and We call that day “Thanksgiving”, now I realize that most Americans simply see it as another paid holiday and a good reason to be home from work. But the reality of the matter is that our forefathers had intended that we (not only should be a people who are thankful to God everyday), but that at least on this one day of the yr, we stop what we’re doing to take sort of a national Sabbath with the intent to simply reflect on God’s goodness and be thankful to Him. Thankful for the grace that He’s shed on this country, thankful for the roof that’s over your head, or the clothes on your back, thankful that there’s food to eat and water to drink, too many times I believe our approach to God is more like what the bible tells us the leeches daughters approach is. Prov 30:15 says, “*The leech has two daughters--Give and Give!*” But the bible is full of examples and exhortation concerning the fact that we’re to be a people who give thanks to the Father and as a matter of fact; failing to give thanks is that which characterizes the wicked. Rom 1:21 tells us in regards to those of whom God’s wrath will come upon that, “*although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*” 2nd Tim 3:2 marks out evil men as unthankful as well. It’s God’s will that we would be a people who give Him thanks, thanks for the breath of life and more importantly thanks for the gift of *everlasting* life that is ours in Christ Jesus.

God has qualified us in Christ to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. The bible tells us that God dwells in unapproachable light; Jesus said that He was the light of the world. In 1 John 1:7 we read, “*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” If the truth of the word of God is a reality and @ work in your life, then we will experience koinonia, intimate fellowship as the blood of Christ washes and cleanses us of sin. and Paul exhorts us in vs 12 to be those who are consistently giving thanks to God for qualifying us, the word “qualified” meaning “to make sufficient”. *He* has made you sufficient, or worthy to be a partaker of the eternal inheritance of the saints, we couldn’t do that, we lacked the qualifications necessary to be a partaker, we were “disqualified” as it were by means of our own merit. But He has qualified you, how so?

Vs13-14

By delivering us from the power of darkness and conveying us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Of course the Son of His love being Jesus Christ you recall that when Jesus was baptized when He came up out of the water that the Spirit descended upon Him in the likeness of a dove and then was that voice heard from Heaven, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*”

Which by the way for those of you who come across these people from time to time who deny the reality of the triune God, or these “Jesus only” people who say that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all one and the same person (in reference to Christ). This is a wonderful portion of scripture that demonstrates the trinity. The Son obviously being the One who is being baptized, and we see the Holy Spirit alighting upon the Son, and then of course the Father speaking out from Heaven saying, “*This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” and So (repeat vs 13). This is what conversion is all about, God delivering us from the power of darkness and transferring us into the Kingdom of His Son. This word “delivered” speaks of “rescuing” or “to draw to oneself.” God drew us out of Satan’s kingdom to Himself.

Eph 2:1-2 reads, “*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...*” We were dead in sin, just floating down the streams of despondency, and Christ gave us new life, He rescued us from the prince of the power of the air, delivered us *from* the power of darkness. and Conveyed or transferred us *into* His kingdom, and that’s what I want you to see here; the salvation that God has given us has both a “from” and “into” aspect to it. He’s taken us from so many things, from sin, from self, from eternal separation from God, from darkness, blindness, debauchery, and decadence and the list could go on and on, so much that God has delivered us from.

But it doesn’t stop there, because as great as the things are that He’s saved us “from” even greater than that are the things that He’s transferred us “into.” and We find several things that relate to this subject throughout the scriptures, John 5:24 Jesus said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*” Ephesians speaks of the heavenly riches in Christ that we have been brought “into” 1Thess 2:12 tells us that God has called us into His Kingdom and into His Glory, 1 more 1 Peter 2:9 “*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” So yes, God calls us *out of* so much, has rescued us *from* so many things that were destroying our lives and ultimately going to separate us from Him forever. But He wasn’t finished with that; He’s called us *into* the light, His love, His glory, His grace, His mercy, His heavenly riches, the Kingdom of the Son of His love.

Vs14

Now we’ve talked about this word “redemption” before. It speaks of paying a purchase price; it was used in the context of going to the slave market to buy a slave, but not to work him on your own land, but rather for the express purpose of setting him free. So that they might have a fresh start in life, you would go down, pay a certain price, his papers would be yours and you would sign them hand to him or whatever and say now go, you’re free from a life of enslavement and bondage.

You had “redeemed” him or her, that’s what Jesus did for us, we were enslaved and in bondage to sin, and didn’t have any means by which to free ourselves. and Jesus came along and paid a purchase price for you for the express purpose of setting you free from sin and the bondage thereof. That you might have a fresh start in life and clean slate, old things passing away and all things being made new, and the purchase price for your life was His own, your redemption was made possible through His blood.

The bible tells us that life is in the blood so in essence He was pouring out His life for yours, life for life. All the OT sacrifices merely a foreshadowing of the sacrificial Lamb of God; you recall that it was the blood of a lamb that was to be placed on the doorposts and lintel of the homes of the Israelites on the night of the Passover. and When the Angel of the Lord would Passover their homes, when He would see the blood on the door (in essence making a covering for them under which they were abiding) then He would continue on, but death would visit the homes of every individual who wasn’t abiding under the blood. The 1st born would die, and through that they were delivered “from” bondage and slavery of Egypt “into” freedom and ultimately the Promised Land. The lesson is obvious, everyone who has by faith applied the blood of the Lamb of God to the doorposts and lintel of their hearts will be delivered from death and the bondage and enslavement to sin. But whoever chooses to stand in defiance to God’s instructions and will for their lives will die, not only physically but also spiritually through eternal separation from God.

Redemption, or the freedom from sin is only through His blood, Hebrews tells that the blood of bulls and goats wouldn’t cut it, it’s through Christ’s blood, and Christ’s blood alone that we have the forgiveness of sins. Leading a pretty good life doesn’t grant you the forgiveness of sins, penance, or self-punishment doesn’t reconcile you to God or cause God to show you mercy. Forgiveness only comes through the blood of Christ being applied to your life by faith, just receiving that work that’s He’s done on your behalf rather than you seeking to do some work to gain His favor, redemption results in forgiveness.

Vs15

He is the image of the invisible God, it seems like every culture has some type of image as to what God is supposed to look like and be like. The Hindu would say, “God is loving, benevolent and gentle, so God must be a cow.” American Indian would look up in the heavens and see an eagle soaring majestically on the wind currents and say, “God is an eagle.” The ancient Egyptian would look at the overwhelming power of the sun and say, “God is Ra, God is the sun.” and Though there may be partial truth’s concerning the nature of God in the “god” of each culture in the respect that He’s loving and benevolent, majestic and powerful, they all miss the total picture because they’re spiritually blind, even as all of humanity is. and So what did God do? He came and dwelt among us in the person of Jesus Christ So that if I want to know what God is like, I don’t have to try and figure out His characteristics or His nature, all I have to do is study the life of Jesus Christ because He is the image of the invisible God.

That word “image” speaks of an “exact replication or manifestation and expression” Jesus said, *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”* He said, *“I and My Father are one.”* Or to understand it another way, the very nature, character and heart beat of God has been *perfectly* demonstrated, and manifested to us in the person of Jesus Christ Jesus said, *“I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”* In other words I never just do what I want to do, but rather I *always* do that which My Father would have Me do, I am expressing His heart to you. John 1:18 *“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”* Or manifested Him, Turn to Hebrews ch 1 (read 1st 3 vs3). You see God has revealed Himself to us in the person of His Son who is the *“brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.”* and He’s the firstborn over all creation.

Now, this vs has stumbled some people throughout the yrs and seems to be one of those vs that a lot of cults (including the J. W.’s) to seek to try and discredit the deity of Christ. They say, (in their mishandling of the scriptures) that since it says here that Jesus was the “firstborn”, He was created and therefore isn’t eternal. But the problem is that the word “firstborn” that’s used here in this particular context is that it has nothing to do with chronology, or a certain sequential order. But rather a place of prominence and priority over, the Vines Greek dictionary states that this word speaks of, “His priority to, and preeminence over, creation, not in the sense of being the "first" to be born.”

Be careful of hanging your hat on any 1 vs when establishing doctrine, because I would be very leery of any doctrine that couldn’t be properly balanced with in the totality of the whole counsel of the Word of God. For instance we know that Esau was born before Jacob (who’s name God changed to Israel) but who received the inheritance? Jacob, and yet we know that it was the firstborn who had the right to the inheritance, but God considered the right to the inheritance to belong to Jacob even though he was born 2nd chronologically and so we read in Ex 4:22 *“Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.”* So even though the order of the birth physically was of a different order, in God’s sight Jacob would hold the right or the order of the 1st born, Manasseh was born to Joseph before Ephraim, yet in Jer 31:9 the Lord said, *“For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.”*

So you can see that careful study of the scriptures in the totality of counsel of God’s Word easily reveals to us the balance of what’s going on here. God’s in reference to the place of priority or preeminence over creation, we could understand this to say, “He is the image of the invisible God, the preeminent One over all creation.”

Maybe Paul was reflecting on the 89th Ps just prior to this where we read in vs 24 in regards to the Messiah, “*Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.*” Giving Him preeminence over all the kings and kingdoms of the earth, thus we have the name given to us in 1 Tim and the book of Rev, the “KING OF KINGS” the preeminent one. and When you just read on here we see again when we get to vs 17 that He was before all things, prior to creation, Jesus Christ was there, which means what? Who was the only One in existence prior to creation? God, so we have here a powerful text that demonstrates to us the reality of the deity and Godhood of Jesus Christ Notice.

Vs16

For by Him all things were created, by whom? By Jesus (specifically as it relates to this text), now, what do we read in Gen 1:1? “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” In Isa 44:24 we read, “*I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.*” So if in the beginning it was God who created the heavens and the earth and the Lord stretches out the heavens alone and spreads abroad the earth by Himself, what do we have here? Is this a contradiction, how could Jesus create all things if in fact it was God who created the heavens and the earth? Do we have here a discrepancy? No, what we *do* have is a radically solid, in fact airtight biblical case for the fact that Jesus is God. John ch 1, “*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 nothing was made that was made.*” Vs 14 “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” Vs 17 “*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*” You recall when Jesus had risen from the dead and all the disciples were just freaking out over the fact that Jesus was alive, that Thomas having not seen the Lord said, I’m not going to believe that Jesus is alive until I put my finger into the print of His nails and my hand into His side. and As they were all standing around inside one of the disciples homes or whatever about a week later, there Jesus appeared to them and said, “hey Thomas, come here” and He invited Thomas to place his fingers into the nail prints in His hands and his hands into His side. and We read that upon that occurrence, Thomas answered Jesus and said, “*My Lord, and my God.*”

For by Him all things were created, be they in heaven or on earth, things visible or invisible. All the hosts of heaven, the angelic beings and all powers and principalities (speaking of various rankings of angels) were created *by* Him. Now again that puts a bit of a damper on the theology of the J.W.’s because they teach that Jesus was in reality Michael, the arc angel. But the bible teaches emphatically that Jesus was not a created one, but rather He’s the Creator. Let’s look together @ Heb ch 1, and lets begin in vs 3 which is in regards to Christ.

Vs3-14

The point being that Jesus isn't simply an emanation which proceeded forth from God as an angel or something, Jesus isn't an angel, He's far above any angelic being, being in fact God Himself. We in both vs 8,9 and 10 clear reference to Jesus Christ being referred to as God by the Father Himself. The angelic hosts of Heaven worship Jesus Christ and He is over them in power, priority, and precedence, He is the preeminent One. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Now this one seems to trip a lot of people up, created through Him I can go with, but created "for" Him I don't dig so much. The bible teaches us the fact that we were created for His good pleasure, and that just stumbles people. "You mean that God created me for Himself, for His own pleasure?" Yep, "Well, I don't think I like that." That's too bad, "Well, I'm not going to live for Him." That's your choice, because you were created in His image, meaning that even as God has a free will to do what He should desire, He created you with that same capacity. and Should you choose to instigate, initiate or activate your will to submit to His, then your life will have fulfillment and meaning. Your life will function the way it's supposed to, it won't be all broken up and splintered, you see I could take my guitar and use as a pole vault if I wanted to, or I could use it in a javelin toss or as an oar to paddle a canoe. But should I choose to do that I'll find that my guitar will wind up all broken or busted up, splintered or at best radically warped and not functioning properly as it was intended to. Only as I use it as it was originally intended to be used by its designer does it bring about true harmony and beauty. Because the fact is, my guitar wasn't made to toss like a javelin, or pole-vault me into the air, or even paddle a canoe.

But that's exactly what people do when it comes to their lives, they say, "I'm going to just throw my life out there the way I want to, I'm going to see how high I can get on my own, or I'm just going to row myself through life and see how it turns out." and Inevitably they wind up broken, splintered in heart, and warped in their emotions, why? Because our designer never intended us to get out there on our own, but to surrender ourselves to His will, to His purposes for our lives. That our lives might bring about harmony and beauty, Jesus told us that it's the Father's good pleasure to give to us the Kingdom. We were created by Jesus and for Jesus, and what does He want to do for you, He wants to give you the Kingdom.

Vs17

You see here we have it, Jesus Christ is *before* all things, He said, "Before Ab was, I am" not "I was", but "I am" speaking of the fact that He is the ever present eternally self-existent God. and In Him all things consist, everything is held together in Him, literally held together.

Many of you are aware of the science behind electricity at least to the degree that you understand the fact that like charges repel. If you have 2 magnets and they're both positive side up and you try and press them together they naturally repel against one another. and Opposite charges attract, but here's the big mystery, inside the nucleus of an atom, there's packed in there all these protons. and All of which hold a charge are positively charged, the question is what holds them together? What keeps all these positively charged from repelling and bursting apart like the positive sides of a magnet?

Scientists will tell you that there's really no good reason (oh there's plenty of fallible hypotheses) but no solid reason as to why everything doesn't just explode with greater than nuclear ramifications. The physicist George Gamow (if I say that correctly) who was one of the founders of the big bang theory said, "we live in a world in which practically every object is a potential nuclear explosive." So don't shake me too hard, another physicist by the name of Karl K. Darrow said, "grasp what this implies, it implies that all the massive nuclei have no right to be alive at all. Indeed, they should never have been created, and, if created, they should have blown up instantly. Yet here they all are...Some inflexible inhibition is holding them relentlessly together. The nature of the inhibition is also a secret...one thus far reserved by Nature herself." But to the believer it's no big mystery who's holding everything together even in a way that should never be possible, Heb tells us that He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Here we read all things consist in Him, Jesus is just holding it all together, but one day He'll just turn lose of it all, 2 Peter 3:10 tells us, "*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*" He'll just turn lose and the atoms will split apart and it all go up in smoke, it'll all just vaporize. In Him all things consist, the word "consist" meaning "held together" and don't miss this, not only in this world physically, but in my life personally, it's Christ who "holds it all together." My emotions, my family, my mental and spiritual stability, Jesus holds it all together, apart from Christ it seems like everything in life is flying apart, but in Him all things consist, all things are held together.

Vs18

Now again (real quick) we know that Jesus wasn't the 1st to be raised from the dead, you recall that Elijah raised a certain widow's son. Jesus raised a few people from the dead, the daughter of Jarius, Lazarus and others, but 2things to consider. #1 Jesus was the 1st to be raised of His own power, and 2ndly all the others would die again, Jesus was the 1st born from the dead, in other words He was raised glorified, never to tasted death again, He's still alive and well and seated at the right hand of the Father. So He is the 1st born from the dead again in priority, why? That in all things He might have the preeminence.

Now sometimes people want the preeminence we read of such a man in 3 John. They want power, position and a platform of authority in people's lives. But God has given the preeminence to Christ and Christ alone. The question is, have you given Christ the preeminence in your own life. Is He the priority of your life, does He take prominence in your life, that's God's desire for you, you were created for His good pleasure, and so may you submit your life to Him yet fresh once again this morning.

If you're here and you've never given that spot to Jesus in your life, you've been seeking to lead your life the way you want to lead it, and you feel broken and splintered or as though maybe things are flying apart in the deep recesses of your heart, things are only held together in Christ and today you experience the forgiveness of sins through the redeeming power of His blood if you'll only surrender.