

The Preeminent Christ

Harmony M.B.C., April 20, 2008, June 11, 2017

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Colossians 1:18-20

Read **Col 1:18** as introduction: 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.

I have noticed over the years that church members don't seem to get very excited when the preacher brings a message that is specifically about Christ. Now, I realize that the dominant theme from pulpits that are called "Christian" is often, in some way, related to Christ. But, think for just a minute and try to remember how many messages you have heard from preachers, including me, that were specifically about some act or characteristic of Christ.

I did a brief review of my sermons for the past 3 years and was able to count only 12 sermons that were focused on Jesus Christ as the centerpiece. Now that is 12 sermons out of more than 200 sermons. I do realize that us preachers showcase Christ in a lot of sermons, but those are not sermons about Christ himself.

I have said all this to highlight the fact that today, we are going to hear about the preeminent Christ. I hope that all of us can glorify our Savior as we think about these truths.

I. **v.18** - He is the HEAD of the body: Some religious teachers have made this to be a metaphor comparing Christ to the head of a human body.

- ❖ This teaching here is not in the anatomical sense, but in the preeminent sense and in the hierarchical sense
 - We talk about someone being a "head waiter," someone who is supervisor over a department of a company or government agency being the "head of the department," in a school the senior supervising teacher might be called a "head teacher."
 - I believe that a lot of churches would be more spiritual if those churches were in the frame of mind where they were very conscious of Jesus Christ being the head of His church.

II. **v.18** - He is the BEGINNING –

- ❖ To help us get a real feel for one thing this means, let's remember **John 1:1-3**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

- Three ideas about beginning here: 1) in the beginning Christ, the Word, was (self existent) already; 2) then, Christ "**was with**" God in the beginning). 3) But, the part I want us to think about is in that last verse: "All things were made by Him..." In other words, anything created had its beginning by and through the creative power of Christ.
- ❖ Now, there is one more thing about "beginning" we want to think about. That is, **Christ is the beginning or starting point of the spiritual creation of new creatures** which are the elect of God.
- ❖ This brings us to the next great thing about our Savior:

III.v.18-He is the FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD:

- ❖ Bodily **eternal resurrection** impossible before Christ
 - We read of Saul consulting with the witch of Endor (**1 Samuel 28**) and calling up Samuel to find out what was happening; but this was at best an apparition, perhaps even a demon
 - Lazarus is raised from the dead as was the ruler of the synagogue's daughter (**Luke 8:55**) but they undoubtedly died later

IV. v.18 - That He MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE: By intent of God, he has been put in this position that He might be placed above everything else

- ❖ If we have even elementary knowledge of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ we understand why He should have preeminence above all things.
- ❖ In all of the realm of God, no entity besides Christ so deserves this honor; no entity besides Christ has earned this honor

V. v.19: the reason for this determination by the Lord - For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fullness dwell;

- ❖ We can think of a thousand reasons why Christ should have the preeminence, but the Lord gives us what seems to me a central reason based in God the Father's own thinking alone.
- ❖ What we can say about this is that in God's plan for the redemption of the human race, it was determined beforehand that Christ would be the actor in the central role of accomplishing it.
- ❖ We can also say that God the Father views the redemption of His people to be a fullness of His accomplishment.
 - We can see what that fullness actually is by looking at verses 12 & 13:
Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath **made us meet to be partakers of**

the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath **delivered us from the power of darkness**, and hath **translated us into the kingdom** of his dear Son:

VI. v. 20: The overview of how this preeminence revealed itself (if Jesus Christ was to have the preeminence in the work of redemption [and He was], what would that look like?): And, having **made peace** through the blood of his cross, by him to **reconcile all things unto himself**; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

- ❖ First Part: to make peace through the blood of His cross
- ❖ Second Part: The peace opens a path for reconciliation of God with creation
 - The peace impacted creatures both on earth and in heaven-there has to be a Christ-made reconciliation for living and dead believers
 - The reconciliation affected all segments of the created human race (the intent of Christ's work was to redeem the entire human race; not just Jews, not just Gentiles. His work was not to redeem every human in the human race, but the entire race as a species, regardless of ethnic origin, culture, etc. The first and at one time ONLY elect of God were found only in the bloodline of Israel (notwithstanding proselytes who took up the Israelite faith).
 - When Jacob as a nation rejected Christ, God rejected them as an elect nation
 - We want to take a moment here to remind ourselves that there is coming a day when the Lord will bring salvation to the nation of Israel. We find in Paul's writings and explanation: **Rom. 11:25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
Rom. 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
Rom. 11:27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.
 - You can find the prophesies about this in **Jeremiah 31:34** and **Isaiah 27:9**.
 - However, He warns us to not reject all Jews as though they were outside any hope of
 - being saved, because there are elect people even in Israel, although the nation as being an elect nation of God has been cut off.
 - Nationally, they are blinded to the reality of the true Christ, yet, He tells us that this has happened to only a part of Israel (**Rom.11:25**); the fact that

3,000 were saved at Pentecost reveals that it was only a part of them that were blinded.

- Since Christ has reconciled the elect of God from all ethnic groups, we are to view Israel as enemies of God concerning the gospel, but we are to love them for election's sake and for the sake of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) of those same unbelieving Jews who were themselves elect of God (**Rom. 3:28**).

VII. Summary: Jesus Christ is the central actor in the great plan of God regarding His redemption of the human race. This was done because the Father wanted Jesus Christ to be the center of all things to Him and to the human race (to have the preeminence). In that central role, our Savior gave His life on Calvary as part of the redemption process to bring us to God, and in doing that He delivered us from the power of darkness, reconciled us to God, and made us worthy to be inheritors with Him of heavenly and eternal things.