

5/3/26

Jesus, Creator And Sustainer Of All
Col. 1:15-17

In Colossians we have one of the richest passages in scripture as a proof text for the divine nature of Jesus and His deity, as He is presented as the cosmic Christ the Creator. Col. 1:15-17

* And His humanity and work of reconciliation for His church. Col. 1:18-23

People acknowledge Jesus as a good man, teacher, even a prophet, but sternly oppose that He is God.

* But the truth is, if Jesus is not God, then he cannot be a good man, a good teacher, let alone a prophet!

In fact, if He is not God, He is the greatest liar and lunatic who has ever existed.

There are two basic areas of attack in regard to the person of Christ:

1. First His humanity, saying he was not a real man, he did not occupy a real body, removing the link that makes it possible for man to be joined with God.

a. The Gnostics taught matter was evil and spirit good, so God being holy, could not have had a body of matter.

b. Docetist Gnostics taught Jesus seemed to have a body, but left no footprints when He walked.

c. Cerinthians Gnostics taught deity came upon Jesus at His baptism and left Him prior to death at the cross.

* First John deals with the denial that Jesus had a human body. 1Jn. 1:1-2; 4:1-2

2. Second the attack on His deity, that He was and is not God, this was the heresy at Colosse.

a. This is the spirit of antichrist. 1Jn. 2:22; Jn. 7

* Remember, the roots of Gnosticism didn't develop fully until the second century!

b. They said aeons had emanated from God and one became so far distant that it created the world of matter, which is evil.

c. Therefore God could not occupy a body of matter that is evil, because He is holy.

d. Therefore, Jesus was not God, but one of many aeons, opposing the doctrine of atonement and redemption.

So they professed the need of special knowledge to climb up these emanations to get to God, dividing men into two groups.

1. The "psuchikos", those controlled by the soul.

2. The "pneumatikos", those controlled by the Spirit.

* So Paul is writing to emphasize his deity and includes His humanity. Col. 1:19, 22a, 28; 2:9-10; 3:3

The entire Bible has one main theme, Jesus Christ.

* "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. 19:10g

* Jesus told the Jews, "There is one that accuses you, even Moses in whom you trust. For if you had

believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me”. Jn. 5:45b-46

1. Jesus said the Scriptures they testify of Me. Jn. 5:39
2. Jesus reproved the two on the road to Emmaus, ”O fools and show of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ... And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Lk. 24:25-27
3. Philip began to preach to the Ethiopian Eunuch Jesus from Isaiah 53. Acts 8:35
4. Paul said He was the seed of the woman, speaking of promise of his virgin birth. Gal. 4:4; Gen. 3:15
5. “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”, said Jesus. Rev. 22:13

Paul reveals the identity of the person of Jesus to be fully divine, being endowed with the attributes of deity from three vantage points. Col. 1:15-17

- I. The identity of Jesus in relation to God. 1:15a
- II. The identity of Jesus in relation to creation. 1:15b-16
- III. The identity of Jesus in relation to matter. 1:17

I. The identity of Jesus in relation to God. **1:15a**

- A. Paul identified Jesus Christ by using the personal pronoun. vs. 15a
* “He.”

1. Jesus was a real person, one who lived and walked on the earth at a set time.
 - a. His birth is recorded by Matthew and Luke in detail, Mark and John do not. Matt. 1; Lk. 2
 - b. His birth is dated by the taxation of Caesar Augustus. Lk. 2:1-2
 - c. His trial by Pilate is recorded and acknowledge in history. Matt. 27
 - d. His personal relation to the Father is the Son of His love. Col. 1:13
 - e. His name divides the time, A. D. and B. C., till most recent modern times.
2. Jesus manifested all the qualities of a human being.
 - a. He had a human body.
 - b. He ate.
 - c. He slept.
 - d. He tired.
 - e. He cried.
 - f. He bled.
 - g. He died.
3. Jesus was the person who redeemed man by His death.
 - a. He was called by John the Baptist the Lamb of God, who took away the sins of the world. Jn. 1:29
 - b. He was the only way, truth and the life to the Father by His own words. Jn. 14:6

- c. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2Cor. 5:21
- d. He did it by redeeming us through His blood, for forgiveness of sins. Col. 1:14
- 4. Jesus then could not have been a phantom or spirit as the false teachers were saying.
 - a. Spirits do not have bodies, but possess them.
 - b. Phantoms don't manifest human attributes.
 - c. Jesus possessed a body and manifested human attributes.

B. Paul identified Jesus Christ by His comparison to God. vs. 15a

* "is the image of the invisible God."

- 1. Paul declared that God is invisible.
 - a. Throughout the Old Testament, God spoke through dreams, visions and theophanic appearance, such as fire, cloud and angelic visitation called Christophanies. Num. 12:6-8
 - 1) Moses saw God, it says. Ex. 24:10
 - 2) Ezekiel saw visions of God. Ezk. 1,10
 - 3) Abraham conversed with the pre-Incarnate Christ, The angel of the LORD in the physical body. Gen. 18
 - b. Moses said to God, "Please show me Your glory," and God said, "You cannot

see my face: for no man can see me, and live." Ex. 33:18, 20

- c. Jesus speaking the woman of Samaria told her that God is a Spirit. Jn. 4:24a
- d. Paul confirmed this truth to Timothy, "Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God...Who only has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can:... 1Tim. 1:17; 6:16
- e. The author to the Hebrews said, "By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible". Heb. 11:27
- 2. Paul declared that Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God."
 - a. The word image "eikon" means derived likeness and used for the head stamped on a coin or a reflection in a mirror.
 - 1) Jesus used it as He asked about paying taxes to Caesar and said, "Whose image was on the coin." Matt. 22:20
 - 2) The word is used of the believer being predestined to be conformed into the image of His Son. Rom. 8:29
 - 3) The word is used of our being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, as we behold in a glass the glory of the Lord. 2Cor. 3:18.

- 4) Sometimes it is used in a diminutive form of “eikonion”, for a photograph.
- b. The word conveys three things.
- 1) First resemblance or likeness.
 - a) Jesus told Philip, “He that has seen me has seen the Father.” Jn. 14:9
 - b) Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” Jn. 10:30
 - c) Paul says that we have the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2Cor. 4:4
 * Leaving no room for emanation!
 - 2) Second representation.
 - a) Hebrew says Jesus is brightness of God’s glory and the express image of his person. Heb. 1:3a
 - b) The word image “karakter” is different but overlapping meaning the seal or dye that makes an impression and leaving the image produced by it.
 - 1)) The only appearance in this form!
 - 2) The word brightness “apaugasma” means reflected out-shining, even as the brightness of the sun comes from the sun yet is distinct from the sun.
 - 3) Third revelation with a physical presence.
 - a) Jesus was once invisible in His pre-existence before the Incarnation.
 * “In the beginning was the Word...
Jn. 1:1

- b) Jesus became visible for all to see, the Son of His love, He who created all things was born!. vs. 13
 * “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we behold his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”
Jn. 1:14
- c) Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. Phil. 2:6-7
 * The word “being” is antecedent condition, he was God and remained God.
- d) Paul is ascribing deity to Jesus, the Godman!

Illustration

The late Dr. Clarence E. Macartney, who had an expert knowledge of the history of Napoleon Bonaparte and who wrote a remarkable biography of the renowned Frenchman, gives us a most interesting comparison of Napoleon and the Lord Jesus Christ. In his volume on What Jesus Really Taught, Dr. Macartney says-----

The two characters of history about whom more books have been written and more words spoken than

others, are Napoleon and Jesus Christ. But what a contrast between these two men who more than all others - have engrossed the mind of man! Napoleon shed rivers of blood upon which to float his ambitions. The only blood the other shed was His own, which He poured out upon the cross, for the redemption of mankind.

Dr. Macartney then proceeds to describe the accomplishments of the two - one leaving behind him a ghastly trail of dead; the other leaving behind Him a trail of mercy and compassion and life. "These are two men who have had more words written about them, more opinions uttered concerning them, than any other men." Some men are fascinated by the character of Napoleon, others with the Person and work of Christ. That Napoleon himself was drawn to a Greater than he, is proven by the following generally accepted testimony he gave of Christ -----

I know men, and I tell you, Jesus is not a man. He commands us to believe, and gives no other reason than His awful word, I am God. Philosophers try to solve the mysteries of the universe by their empty dissertations: fools: they are like the infant that cries, to have the moon as a plaything. Christ never hesitates. He speaks with authority. His religion is a mystery; but it subsists by its own force. He seeks, and absolutely requires the love of men, the most difficult thing in the world to claim. Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal, conquered the world but they had no friends... I founded my empire upon what? - force. Jesus founded His empire upon love: and at this hour

millions would die for him... What an abyss between my misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, who is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending all over the earth. Is this death? I tell you, the death of Christ is the death of a God, I tell you, Jesus Christ is God.

No other man, born of woman, has gathered around His claims and character such voluminous literature as Jesus Christ. John says that "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" about His accomplishments. Jn. 21:24, 25

Application

1. The Father calls Jesus God, "Your throne, Oh God, is for ever and ever." Heb. 1:8

* If He were not God, He would be an imperfect image of God and neither could he be the Word, that abode with God face to face. Jn. 1:1

2. God the Father is revealed and manifested only by Jesus, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. Jn. 1:18

* That is why Jesus made the radical statement, "I Am the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me. Jn. 14:6

3. He took on a body for the visibility of man, to veil God's glory that would destroy man, if we looked on it, even as he told Moses. Ex. 33; Jn. 1:14

* Representing both a perfect picture of God, the visible form of the invisible God, and the perfect picture of man before the fall, made in the image of God, the Last Adam. Gen. 1:26-27; 1Cor. 15:45

4. One day Jesus was at Caesarea Philippi with His disciples, and he asked them who men thought he was? Matt. 16:13-17

* Peter said, “You art the Christ the Son of the living God”. And so that there would be no mistake in the mind of Peter or the others, Jesus said, “Blessed are you Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.”

* Jesus is the image or photograph of the invisible God!

5. The great mistake that man makes is to think that an intellectual knowledge about God is sufficient to get him to heaven, rather than a revelation of God.

1Cor. 1:21; 2:4, 7-8, 10

* No man can find God by searching, no man can conclude that God is by his intellect!

6. All things in the Old Testament were shadows of the very image to come and not the image itself, the substance being Jesus Christ. Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17

* Isaiah saw God on His throne and John tells us it was Jesus before he incarnation to be the visible form of the invisible God. Is. 6; Jn. 12:47

The identity of Jesus in relation to God is that He is the visible form of the invisible God!

II. The identity of Jesus in relation to creation. 1:15b-16

A. Paul declared that Jesus Christ is supreme over creation. vs. 15b

* “the firstborn over all creation.”

1. Some teach this statement means that Jesus was created at a point and time and therefore had a beginning like any other person.

a. This was the heresy of the Arian of Alexandria 280 A.D. the church refuted and labled it heresy at the council of 324 A. D.

b. It is corrupt and a twisting of the Word that is still being taught by some cults and occults, as the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

c. They teach this proves that Jesus is not God for he was the first to be born and therefore He is a created angel, Michael.

2. The word firstborn “prototokos” can mean priority in time or supremacy in rank, the context always helps determine the meaning.

a. The word in our context can only be interpreted to give emphasis to the supremacy of Christ, seeing Paul has before this declared Him to be God.

b. The statemennt is a contrast, Christ to creation.

* Though the emphasis is supremacy of rank, it also presupposes His priority in time, for He always was.

1) It is used in Psalms as prophetic of the Messiah’s title and defines the word firstborn. Ex. 4:22; Ps. 89:27

* “Israel is My firstborn and I will make Him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth”.

- 2) The place of importance “over all creation” separates Jesus from creation, rather than placing Him subject to it or part of it! Phil. 2:9

B. Paul declared that Christ was responsible for all of creation. vs. 16

1. First, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth”, describing their locations. vs. 16a; Gen. 1-2
 - a. Heaven is everything above the earth.
 - 1) By Him, is better translated “in Him”, referring to the sphere of power for the creation.
 - 2) This includes all things in the first heaven, the space where birds fly.
 - 2) This includes all things in the second heaven, the stellar heaven, where the star and planets are.
 - 3) This includes the third heaven, where God dwells.
 - b. Earth is all found on or in the earth.
 - 1) Man.
 - 2) Beast.
 - 3) Fish.
 - 4) Birds.
 - 5) The elements that compose the earth.
 - a) The seas.

- b) The lakes.
- c) The mountains.
- d) The vegetation, etc.

2. Second, Things that are “visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers”, describing their perceived quality. vs. 16b-c
 - a. The visible on the earth and in the heavens is evident and knowable by the perceived senses, sight, taste, touch, hearing, smelling.
 - b. The invisible on the earth and the heavens that are not evident or knowable and are non-perceivable by the senses, the spirit world.
 - c. The particular list is, “whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers”, without doubt refer to the invisible order of angels that are listed by their ranks, both good and evil.
 - 1) Throne seats, government lords, first persons or authorities.
 - 2) Jesus created them all, therefore they are not greater than He but a creation of His, fallen or not. Col. 2:10, 15, 18
3. Third, things in their totality were created by Jesus therefor subject to Him not beyond Him, “All things were created through Him and for Him.” vs. 16d
 - a. “Through Him” refers that He was the agent or channel of creation.

* God created all by Jesus Christ. Eph. 3:9

- b. “For Him” refers to the end, purpose or goal of creation, to serve His will and Himself.

Illustration

*** Size of Universe**

We learn from the astronomers that the Milky Way the disc-shaped galaxy to which our sun belongs, is a family of more than 100 billion stars. And these scientists say there may be as many as 100 billion other galaxies in the universe. And they believe that the billions of these galaxies' billion stars may have hundreds of millions of planets like our earth. God's creation from a one-sentence command! #2200

*** Big Hole Up North**

One of the most inspiring and thrilling of recent disclosures of astronomers is that there is a great empty space in the north in the nebula of the constellation of Orion - a heavenly cavern so gigantic that the mind of man cannot comprehend it and so brilliantly beautiful that words cannot adequately describe it.

All astronomers agree there is a huge opening in Orion which is perhaps more than 16,740,000,000,000 miles in diameter. The diameter of earth's orbit is 186,000,000 miles, which in itself is incomprehensible to man. Yet the opening into this heavenly cavern of Orion is 90,000 times as wide. In

other words, there could be 30,000 solar systems like ours with a sun in the middle of each, across the entrance of the opening in the north, and still have room to spare. #2212

*** One Second of Sun's Energy**

The sun radiates more energy in one second than man has used since the beginning of civilization. In one second, a typical quasar throws out enough energy to supply all the earth's electrical needs for billions of years. #1367

*** Comparison From Hollowed Sun**

The sun is so large that, if it were hollow, it could contain more than one million worlds the size of our earth. There are stars in space so large that they could easily hold 500 million suns the size of ours. There are about 100 billion stars in the average galaxy. And there are at least 100 million galaxies in the known universe. #2204

Application

1. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything that was made. Jn. 1:3

- a. Genesis records the creation of the earth out of nothing, it says, “In the beginning God created “bara” the heavens and the earth.” Gen. 1:1
- b. Despite of what evolution says, God has made us and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Ps. 100:3

1) Isaiah describes it beautifully, allowing us to envision his creative power, “Who has

measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?" Is. 40:12

2) "I am the Lord, I make all things." Is. 44:24

3) "Whom also he made the worlds, age, law and grace. "Heb. 1:2

2. Everything on earth is made up of atoms, made up of protons, neutrons and electrons that you cannot see.

a. So we can correctly say everything that we can see is made up of things that we can not see.

b. Scripture is way ahead of science and never contradicts true science, which is distinct from the evolutionary hypothesis taught as fact.

* "Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. 11:3

3. Jesus is greater than any angel or power...he is the head of all principality and power. Col. 2:10

a. Christ spoiled principalities and powers and triumphed over them. Col. 2:15

b. He is above all principality and power and might, and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Eph. 1:21

c. Paul tells us that the church is manifesting God's wisdom to these principalities and powers in heaven. Eph. 3:10

d. Paul says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph. 6:12

4. Jesus is the key to life; without Him we can do nothing. Jn 15:5

a. For of Him and through him, and to him, are all things. Rom. 11:36

b. There is One God the Father, of whom are all things, and are in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. 1Cor. 8:6

c. One day he will gather all things to himself, in the dispensation of the fullness of time. Eph. 1:10

d. One day every knee shall bow and tongue confess.... Phil. 2:10

The identity of Jesus in relation to creation is that He is the Creator!

III. The identity of Jesus in relation to matter. 1:17

A. Paul declared that Jesus is not only creator of all things, but He being God preceded all that He created. vs. 17a

* "And He is before all things."

1. Jesus is and was before all created things, He pre-existed and anticipated them and is Lord of creation. Prov. 8:23; Jn. 1:1

* He had primacy over the cosmos, the firstborn of all creation! vs. 15b

2. Jesus is the origin of all things.
3. Jesus is the source of all things.
4. Jesus is the caused of all things.
 - a. Without him was not anything made that was made. Jn. 1:3
 - b. That is why he is the heir of all things. Heb. 1:2

B. Paul declared that Jesus has a permanent part of His creation. vs. 17b

* “and in Him all things consist.”

1. Jesus is the one who holds all things together, the sustained of all things.
 - a. The word consist “synesteken” means to hold together, preservation or coherence, the unifying principle of life. Heb. 1:2-3
 - b. The atom has positive charges that should repel each other but don't.
 - c. He upholds all things by the word of His power. Heb. 1:3

* This is what makes our universe an orderly cosmos not a chaos of random chance.
2. Within the atom these positive charges that by all laws of science should repel each other but by some coincidence, they don't, scientists have called it nuclear glue.
 - a. If, by chance, they did repel each other, an explosion would occur. That means

that everything has the capacity of being an explosive.

- b. What holds it together? Jesus, by the word of His power! Heb. 1:3

* “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” without Him nothing came into existence, having their origin and continuance.” Jn. 1:2
- c. One day the earth is going to melt with fervent heat the Scriptures tell us.
 - 1) The Psalms speaks about the earth dissolving. Ps. 75:3
 - 2) Peter tell us the same thing tells us the earth will be melted with fervent heat. 2Pet. 3:10

Illustration

The sun is a great power plant. If you were to mark off one square yard on the sun, you would find that it is giving off 70,000 horsepower of energy continuously. There are a tremendous number of square yards on the sun's surface: more than 10,000 times the number of square yards on the surface of the earth.

Suppose that we decide to buy the energy that the sun gives off for a period of twenty-four hours. Suppose we can buy this energy for one-fourth cent per kilowatt-hour. To pay for this energy in silver dollars would require enough money to cover the United States four miles deep.

This represents a tremendous amount of energy. Yet when God created the sun, He had to put into that act of creation all of the energy that has come from the sun and all that which may yet to come from the sun. There is still enough energy in the sun to last for some thirty billion years.

The earth weighs 6,000 million, million, million tons and the amazing thing is that God hangs it on nothing. Job 26:7 #1230

The wonderful things in nature are oftentimes the smallest.

A flea leaps 200 times its length. A man would have to jump 1,200 feet to equal this proportionately.

The housefly takes 440 steps to travel three inches, and does it in a half second corresponding to man running 20 miles in a minute.

An ant lifts a load many, many times its own weight - a man would have to lift a diesel locomotive and carry it on his back to compare with that of the ant. #2505

Turnip seeds, under good conditions, increase their weight 15 times a minute, and in rich soil turnip seeds may increase their weight 15,000 times a day.

There is no force more powerful than a growing squash. A squash 18 days old has been harnessed in such a way that in its growing process it lifted 50 pounds on lever 19 days later it lifted 5,000 pounds.

Application

1. Jesus is Eternal and has always been by virtue that He is God, created all things and is before all things.

a. "You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me." Is. 43:10

b. John the Baptist said "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me'", yet John was six months older, he was referring to the pre-existence of Jesus. Jn. 1:30

c. Jesus said, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he was glad", "Before Abraham was I am". Jn. 8:56, 58

d. His goings have been from of old, from everlasting, from the vanishing point to the vanishing point. Micah 5:2

2. The Omnipotence of Jesus is one of His attributes as God, Creator and sustainer, having all power.

a. Isaiah says, "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings

like eagles, They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint. Is. 40:28-31

- b. “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?” Jer. 32:27

3. Jesus is superior to any man or angel.

- a. “Being made so much better than the angels.
And again, when he brings in the first-begotten into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” Heb. 1:4, 6
- b. “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Heb. 1:13-14

4. If, in fact, Jesus is not God, Creator and sustainer of the world but a created angel and less than the emanations of the false teachers how can Paul say :

- a. That He is before all things. Col .1:17
- b. That in Him all fullness dwells, in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Col .1:19
- c. That we are complete in Him, regarding salvation. Col. 2:9
- d. Jesus was the answer to Isaiah’s prayer, that God would rent the heavens and come down. Is. 64:10
- e. In him we live, move and have our being. Acts 17:28
- f. “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are

his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”
Rom. 11:33

- * Paul declares, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1Tim. 3:16

The identity of Jesus in relation to matter is that He is the sustainer of everything!

Conclusion

Paul the apostle has revealed the identity of the person of Jesus to be fully divine, being endowed with the attributes of deity from three vantage points.

- I.** The identity of Jesus in relation to God, He is the visible form of the invisible God!
 - II.** The identity of Jesus in relation to creation, He is the Creator of all things!
 - III.** The identity of Jesus in relation to matter, He is the One sustaining all things!
- * Jesus is God, creator and maintainer of this world. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Heb. 13:8
- * Can you say as Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” Jn. 20:28