

## Colossians 1:15-18

### Announcements:

- Bring up the Dominican Republic Team - *pray over them...*
- Why I am not going (*share my heart*) and working on rhythms next year (2026)

Please open to **Colossians Chapter 1** (*Need a Bible? Raise your hand...*)

- Last time: **Walking Worthy**: Cultivation (mind), Transformation (fruit), Liberation (qualified).
- This Time: One of the **most EPIC descriptions of Jesus' deity** in all the scriptures!!!

### Message Title: Supremely Sufficient (part 1)

- **Creator of ALL** (verses 15-17)
- **Head of the CHURCH** (verses 18-20)
- **Redeemer of YOU** (verses 21-23)

This section of scripture is **next level incredible**. It fully **exalts the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

- Many scholars believe these verses were even **sung as some sort of early Christian hymn**.
- The OG Greek appears to have a **poetic, rhythmic approach** to it. *Can't be dogmatic, but likely.*

Important to point out - all these verses are **very purposeful on Paul's part**. **Combating Gnosticism**.

- **1st century Gnosticism** - "A heretical, philosophical religion that taught salvation came through secret knowledge (**spirit = good | material = bad**) rather than faith in Christ death/resurrection"
  - Will **define nuances as we work on**, but essentially they have **secret, super knowledge**.
  - The **true creator God is pure spirit and is good**, but **distant and far removed**...
  - **The material world is evil**, created by a **lesser, flawed deity(ies)** ("**Demiurge**").
  - These **lesser surrogate gods (emanations)** are **involved with our world** (angels, demons, Jesus, etc) - so that the **true hidden god doesn't have to touch or be involved**.
- Picture a **rock splashing into a lake creating ripples**. **Jesus is just one of those ripples...**
- To Gnostics, **Christ was not God in the flesh** and therefore was **NOT enough** (need PLUS!).
- Paul is going to **confront and combat this HEAD ON!** Christ is the **Supreme One!**
  - (*and, the better you know the real thing, the easier it is to spot a fraud...*) (**dollar bill**)

All of this is so good, as I was studying, I couldn't gloss-over.

- **Splitting into two messages**. Will stop mid-message (**gotta come back!**) **DEEP dive!**

### **Creator of ALL** (verses 15-17)

### **PRAY**

V. 15 - **He is**

- **Who is? Christ is!** (*calls back to the first 8 verses*) - **Christ is the object of this entire section!**
- Paul is about to make it clear **how supreme & sufficient** Christ really is (*nothing more needed!*)

Are you ready for this amazing **christological hymn** of our Lord?

V. 15 - The **image of the invisible God**

- God = **Invisible** - This is *true theology in old & new testaments*. **God is spirit/cannot be seen!**
  - 1 Tim 1:17, CSB - "Now to the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
  - John 1:18(a), CSB - "**No one has ever seen God.**" Well *that's clear*, but *there's more...*
  - John 1:18(b), CSB - "The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—**he has revealed him.**"
  - John agrees with Paul - that **God is invisible**, but **Christ has revealed Him to us.**
  - John 14:7-9 - "'If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also' ...Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father...' Jesus said to him... '**He who has seen Me has seen the Father.**'"
  - *Want to know what God the Father is like?* **Look at Christ the Son!**
- Our text says Christ is the **"Image"** of the invisible God...
- **Eikon (icon)** = "image," "likeness," or "representation." (i.e. - coin, statue, mirror)
- But this verse is *not just talking about form* (statues can carry the **form**, but **not the substance**)
- The *text is saying* that Christ is **a true appearing of the very same substance as God.**
- Hebrew 1:3 - "**The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature**"
  - While *this passage uses a different Greek word (charaktēr)*, **it parallels the eikōn** concept, stating Christ is **"the exact representation of His being."** (shares nature!)
- *God the Father is invisible* yet has been **exactly revealed to us in the person of Christ.**
- **The God (Ho Theos)** = *definite article*. *Not just any old divine being, take your pick, nah...*
- Christ is *no mere ripple, emanation, or lesser being...* **HE is the supreme God of all!**

### **Would you like to know what God is really like?**

- **Look to our Lord Jesus Christ** as *revealed in the Scriptures!*
- *Do you want to know if God cares about the poor and needy?* **Look at Jesus.**
- *Do you want to know if God meets sinners in broken places?* **Look at Jesus.**
- *Do you want to know if God is holy, righteous, and just?* **Look at Jesus.**
- You don't need a *mystical experience, or secret knowledge* of a phantom god. **You need Jesus!**

### **NLT - Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.**

- *Everything God wants to reveal about Himself, He has revealed in Christ.*
- **Stop looking elsewhere!**

\*\*\***But wait, there's more...**

### **V. 15 - The firstborn over all creation**

- This phrase has *a different nuance*. On the surface, it **sounds like Jesus is a "created" being.**
- That's the teaching of the **Jehovah's Witnesses** (*first created being (Michael, the archangel)*)
  - **Islam, Baha'i, Hinduism**, fall in this category too (*created/many manifestations/avatar*)
- An **early heretic named Arius in the 3rd century** taught something similar as well. That Christ was *a created being* and **not eternal like the Father.**
- The **Nicene Creed in 325AD** explicitly **condemned Arianism** by clarifying the doctrine stating that Christ is: **"God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father"** (First Council of Nicea, 325 AD) (**Image of Nicholas of Myra slapping Arius for denial of Christ's deity. Viewed as blasphemy of Christ's glory**)
- **The issue is that of deity. Is Christ God or not?**

- So, let's look at the definition of the word for **Firstborn** (from our text)
- **Prototokos** = "One who holds the rights, privileges, and preeminence of the firstborn position - whether by literal birth order, or by sovereign appointment to a position of supremacy and authority (of highest honor or rank)" (it's the latter usage that Paul is intending here)
- While the word **firstborn** can mean: chronologically, the first in a family, the Bible very often uses it to show "status as highest in rank or authority, dealing with quality/kind, not time..."
- In Jewish culture, the firstborn was the one promised the right of the family inheritance.
  - The Bible refers to **Ephraim as firstborn** though Manasseh was born first (Jer 31:9)
  - **Same with Jacob and Esau** (Ex 4:22)
  - A reference to **Israel as firstborn** - Exodus 4:22-23 - "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: **Israel is My son, My firstborn**. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me.'" - Not first created among nations, but **held the position of honor**.
  - A psalm **referencing the Messiah** - Psalm 89:27 - "I will also **appoint him my firstborn**, the most exalted of the kings of the earth." - clearly indicating highest in rank.
- Clear case in the bible we're **dealing with position or status**. **Of what?**
- **Over all creation** = **the supreme one!** Not part of creation but **over all of it**.
- Friends, **Jesus isn't just one path to God among many**. He isn't just a historical figure, or good enlightened man, **He is the supreme Lord over all creation**. **Can I get an amen?**
- This means He has the right to command our complete allegiance - not just Sunday, but all...

\*\*\*But wait, there's more...

#### V. 16 - For **by Him**

- **By who? Christ that is!** **The supremely sufficient one**.
- Literally **"in (en) Him"** - denoting that **Christ is the means** by which...

#### V. 16 - **All things were created** that are:

- **How many things? All**. Seven times in six verses we see **"all"**
  - **Ta panta** = **all things without exception** = **absolutely everything!** (even the thorns...)
  - J-Dubs **NWT** uses **"other"** Lame! Very lame! Heretical! (Need a slap from St. Nicholas)
- John 1:3 - "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." - **Well, that's pretty clear!**
- We should not be surprised that wind and waves obey him, and sickness and demons flee!
- **Aorist tense** points to the definite historical act of creation: (Gen 1 - "God said, **Let there be**")

\*\*\*Paul gives us a few realms just to make sure he encompasses everything...

- (All on one slide)
- **In heaven and on earth** (all locations)
- **Visible and invisible** (all types of existence)
- **Thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities** (all spiritual hierarchies)

#### V. 16 - In **heaven/earth**

- **Heavens (ouranos)** - Refers to the expanse of the skies above (sun, moon, clouds, stars, etc)
- **Earth (ge)** - the ground on which we walk and live (oceans, rivers, mountains, valleys, etc)
- **Above and below**. **Stars and snails**. **Telescopes and microscopes**. From millions of light years away to the tiniest of amebic single cell organisms... **astounding, the grand vastness!**

- There's not one square inch of the universe that doesn't belong to Jesus! **Amen?**

#### V. 16 - Visible/invisible

- **Things we can see** (people & plants) and **things we can't see** (air, gravity, magnetism, radio/sound waves, the souls of men) Ever think about that unseen world? **Lord of all!**

#### V. 16 - Thrones/dominions/principalities(rulers)/powers(authorities).

- These are **four descriptions (classes) of the angelic/spirit world**. (heavenly places)
- A study for another day - but there is **a hierarchy and territories to angelic beings**.
- **Christ created them all** (though some have rebelled against Him... will be dealt with)
- **The gnostics** held a **high emphasis on angelic beings & spiritual emanations**. Paul is making it clear **Christ created all angelic beings**. **He's above them all. Amen?** (they all answer to Him)

\*\*\*But wait, there's more...

#### V. 16 - All things were created through Him and for Him.

- **Two prepositions** reveal **Christ's comprehensive role** in creation:
  - **Through (by) Him (dia autou)**: Christ is the **agent/instrument of creation**, the *means by which everything came into being...*
  - **For (unto) Him (eis auton)**: Christ is the **goal of creation**, the **purpose for which everything exists...** *The whole earth is full of His glory!*
  - **For** can also be translated **toward**... **All of creation is moving toward Christ**. **He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. (originator and culminator!)**

**Ever wonder why you were created? Ever asked, why do I exist? Through and for Jesus!**

- You were **not designed to merely**: *work, play, party, eat, survive, and eventually die.*
- You were **designed for so much more!** You were created **for the glory of Jesus**, and your **true life's purpose** is found in **knowing Him and living for Him**. **That's why you're here...**

\*\*\*But wait, there's more...

#### V. 17 - And He is before all things

- **Before = two meanings: Temporal (existed before all things) | Positional (ranks above all things)**
  - **Both are true!** Christ is **eternally preexistent** and is **supremely above all** created things
- And, in our text, **HE** is **emphatic** in the Greek. **He Himself**. Meaning: **He and no other!**
- It's also in the **present tense** which means **He** is **"continually before all things..."** (*not just "back then" then at some point, but also today, at this very moment!*)
- Really, all of this *calls back* to the **Great I AM of the burning bush in Exodus (Exodus 3)**
- *In John's Gospel*, when **Christ claimed His eternal existence**, the people asked him *how this was so*, they said, *"you are not even 50 years old, man! How could you have seen Abraham?"*
- **John 8:57-59 - "Truly, truly (Amen, Amen), I say to you, before Abraham was born, I Am. Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him..."**
- **Double Amen is a big deal!** - He's calling back to the **eternal God of the burning bush!** (*that's why they sought to stone him...*)
- **Ancient Arius, J-Dub's, Islam, etc** all **heresy that deny that Christ is truly God**. Paul's words here simply **do not allow for that!**

\*\*\*But wait, there's more...

V. 17 - In Him **all things consist** (hold together)

- Note once again the repetition of **"all things"** - Could Paul be any more clear?
- **Consist/Hold Together (sunistemi)** = "To place/hold together, to support/sustain, or to keep from falling or dissolving... (coherence and harmony)"
- And, this word is in the present tense. Basically Christ is **currently and continually holding our entire universe together**. (gravity (chaos), size of sun & distance from sun (melt or freeze), tilt on axis (four seasons), size and distance of moon (tides), ratio of breathable air, land to water mass ratio, just right magnetosphere to protect from radiation, layers of our atmosphere to regulate temperatures and protection from space debris, etc)
  - **IF ANYONE OF THESE IS OFF, WE CEASE TO EXIST!**
- Even further, **on an atomic level**, scientists are still puzzled on what binds the nucleus of an atom: protons, all positively charged, should repel per Coulomb's (cool-uhms) law—yet they cluster tightly. Enter gluons, the force carriers that bind quarks and stabilize nuclei through the strong force (but you guys knew all that!).
  - **We know the Gluon who orchestrates it all, don't we!?**
  - **Christ, he holds all things together - they all consist in Him!**
  - Without His grip, every atom teeters on the edge of nuclear fission.
  - As 2 Peter 3:10 tells us, one day the elements will melt in fervent heat when He releases His hold, ushering in a new heaven and earth!
- So do you want to know what is currently keeping the entire universe from melting into chaos?
  - Hebrews 1:3, NIV - "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, **sustaining all things by his powerful word**"
- Christ is the **grand conductor of the symphony of the cosmos** - and if He can hold the entire universe together, how much more can He hold you and I, our lives together...?
- This **same Jesus** who holds the galaxies in His hand, knows the number of hairs on your head.
  - **Nothing in your life** - no disease, no political power, no economic disaster (praying for the government shut down, BTW) - exists outside of Christ's sovereign control.
  - **Trust Him... Surrender to Him... Believe Him...** (when your life feels like it's falling apart, remember who Christ is...) - Are there areas of your life where you're doubting?

Wow, what a **jam-packed section of glorious scripture!!!**

- Christ is the **creator and sustainer** of all things.
- He **existed before everything** in our universe and **He is highest in rank above** it all.
- He is **the means** by which everything is created and **the purpose/goal** of it as well.
- He is **no mere lesser being... He is God in the flesh!**
  - Why would you look anywhere else for purpose in life? **Worship Him! Praise Him!**
  - **(Family homework - psalm 19 = bask/marinate/soak in His glory! :)**

\*\*\*But wait, there's more...

**Head of the CHURCH** (verses 18-20)



Remember I said we were going to **split the message in two**? Here's *where we're going to do that*. I'm going to *point out a few things in verse 18*, then *we will have communion*, and *pick up here next time*...

And *notice the language change*. There's a shift from **cosmic scope (all creation)** to **covenant community (the church)**. **Christ is Lord of the universe AND Lord of His church!**

#### V. 18 - And **He is**

- **He** is **fronted for emphasis**, meaning **"He and no other!"**
  - (no one else is head of the church!)

#### V. 18 - The **head of the body, the church**

- A **few words to look at** here:
- The church is a **body** (family, kingdom, vineyard, flock, building, bride) **Rom. 12 = One body!**
  - (Many members: yes, ears, hands, feet...) **all baptized into this body!** (one suffers?)
- This is the **church (ekklesia)** - *the "called out" ones*. We are a family of people, called out.
- And we have a **Leader, a Master, a Lord, a King**.
- **Head (kephale)** = *source/origin* or *leader/ruler* = **Both are true with Christ!**
  - **He** is the **origin of the church** like a *spring head is to a river* (providing/supplying)
  - And, **He** is the **ruler of the church** like a *king is to His kingdom* (directing/protecting)
- **Everything the church needs is found in Christ**. Through **His Word** and through **His Spirit**. We *drink of His living water* and *out of us flows rivers of living water*.
- But **the key point** is that **Christ, He Himself**, is **head of His church (no one else!)**
  - *\*Not government (covid); not culture (cancel), not the congregation (you out there); not the BOD or elders, not the big tithers, not the influential leaders, not the senior pastor.*
  - **Christ is the Senior pastor and CEO of His church**, *around the world* and *Selah Hills*
- You **cannot separate the head from the body** without death.
- To *neglect the church* is to **starve your connection with Christ** (imagine a foot going rogue)
  - *It would wither and die. Lone-ranger Christianity isn't biblical Christianity!*
  - The *fellowship of the saints* is **a means of grace** through **our Lord (head)** - **stir up!**

\*\*\*But wait, there's more...

#### V. 18 - Who is the **beginning, the firstborn from the dead**

- **Same concepts as earlier**. Christ is the *initiator and ruler* of the world, but here - **His church**.
- We see *"beginning"* and *"firstborn"* again in the text but **now with a specific intention**.  
**Firstborn from the dead!**
- Christ was *not the first person to rise from the dead*, but He was the **first to rise and NEVER DIE AGAIN**. And in doing so, **"He is the firstborn among many brethren"** (Romans 8:29)
  - He *initiated and paved the way* for **resurrection life!**
  - **1 Cor. 15:23, ESV** - *"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."*
  - This parallels the **first fruit offering in Leviticus 23:9-14**.
    - **First crop of the Barley harvest**.
      - *Wave it before the Lord after Sabbath*
      - *Thanksgiving for God providing*

- **Consecration of the entire coming harvest** unto God!
- Christ rose on the **Sunday of the Feast of First Fruits**, and **ushers in the new harvest to come!**
  - **Because he rose, we will also rise! Christ has supremacy over death itself.**
  - **Rev. 1:18 - "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death." - Hallelujah, Death is defeated!**

\*\*\*But wait, there's [ONE] more...

V. 18 - That **in all things** He may have **the preeminence**.

- **In how many things? All. In everything.** Creation, church, government, society, personally.
- **In all things He Christ has, what?**
- **Preeminence (proteuo) = To hold first place**
  - Many translations say that here - He holds **"first place in everything!"**
  - That's **a great summary verse** of this entire passage (**false teachers were heretics**)
- He is **not a lesser god**, or **a ripple farther down the line**. He is **The Big Splash The Rock!**
  - Christ is **source, sustainer, and summation** of **all things**. **He is God.**

So **QUOTE PLAYING GAMES WITH JESUS.**

- **He's Lord**, **whether you like it or not...** **Bow now... or bow later... (get serious and bold)**
  - **Don't know him? Now is the moment.** **Not later.** **G. O. S. P. E. L. (altar call)**
  - **Do you know Him?** Don't **treat him like he's not important**. Put him **on a shelf until life gets hard.** **That is lame. Worship HIM! Repent, confess. Adore. Submit**
  - He **must have first-place** in everything. **First-place in our families, jobs, money, time, conversations, efforts, and especially in the congregating of His church...**

**Image - Leonadro Davinci's - The Last Supper Painting**

- Notice, in this famous painting, the **hands of Christ are empty.**
- Davinci **worked on this masterpiece for 3 years**, determined to be the crown of his work!
- Before unveiling, the story says he **showed it to a friend who he respected for feedback.**
- His friend **praised the painting**, **"The cup in Jesus' hand,"** he said, **"is especially beautiful."**
- **Disappointed**, Davinci went and **painted the cup away**. Astonished, the friend asked why?
- **"Nothing,"** Da Vinci explained, **"must distract from the figure of Christ."**

**Closing**

**Behold Him for who He is! King of the universe, Lord of His church!**

- **May nothing** in our lives **distract from that** or **take His place.**

**The best way to honor Christ is in the taking of communion...**

**1 Cor 11:23-24 - "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is [given] for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"**

**1 Cor 11:25 - "In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"**

1 Cor. 11:26, NLT - *"For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again"*

**PRAY**