

The Supremacy of Christ: Colossians

*Session #2
Peace with
God through
Christ*

More on *The Colossian Heresy* (leftover from last week)

Paul never explicitly describes the false teaching he opposes in the Colossian letter. The nature of the heresy must be inferred from statements he made in opposition to the false teachers. An analysis of his refutation suggests that the heresy was diverse in nature. Some of the elements of its teachings were:

1. *Ceremonialism*. It held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals and circumcision [i.e. Judaizers].
2. *Asceticism*. “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”
3. *Angel worship*.
4. *Deprecation of Christ*. Implied in Paul’s stress on the supremacy of Christ
5. *Secret knowledge*. The Gnostics boasted of this (see emphasis on Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom”).
6. *Reliance on human wisdom and tradition*.

These elements seem to fall into two categories, Jewish and Gnostic. It is likely, therefore, that the Colossian heresy was a mixture of an extreme form of Judaism and an early stage of Gnosticism.

Hoeber, R. G. ©1997. *Concordia Self-Study Bible* p. 1825. St. Louis: CPH.

Colossians 1:15-23

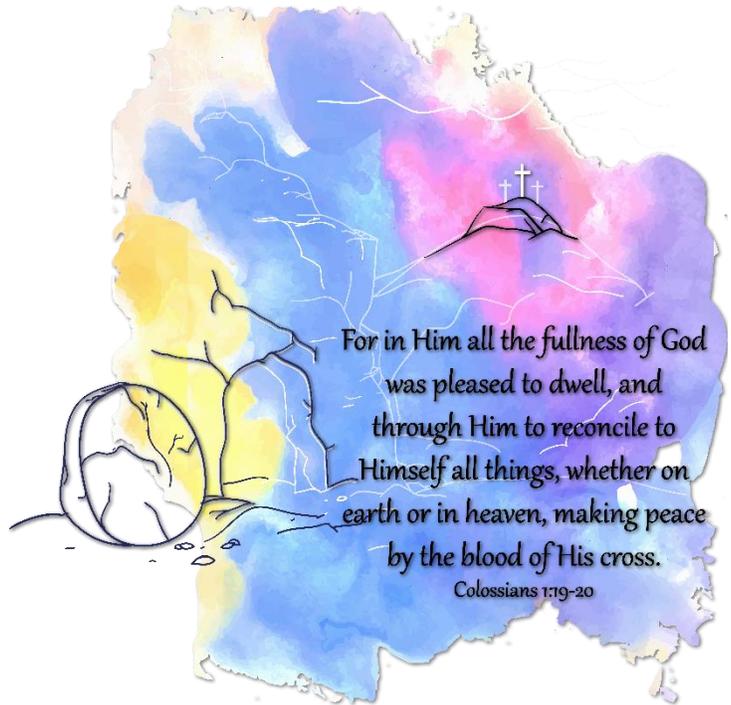
⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. ²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Go back over verses 9-20 and circle (or at least count) the word *all* whenever you find it in the passage. How many are there? _____

**What does the (over) use of this word say to you about the core of Paul’s words here?
How might this little word point to the Supremacy of Christ?**

Peace with God

Even though this phrase, *peace with God* seems simple enough, it is a huge concept in the Christian faith. Last week, we looked into the importance of *hope* in our walk of faith. Now, we examine another characteristic that often seems to be in short supply. While it feels like we live in less peaceful times than others in history, I believe most of our forefathers and mothers believed the same thing about their own times. There is a reason for that sense of chaos, fear, or even despair that seems to ride through our hearts and minds in the quiet darkness of the night, or in the privacy of our own thoughts. Sin has shattered peace on every level. We are well acquainted with the consequences.



After declaring in no uncertain terms the depth and all-encompassing nature of God's power / Jesus' supremacy, Paul brings up the shedding of Jesus' blood in order to restore the peace that we have shattered. According to the passage, especially 1:19-20, make clear the fact that Jesus suffering and death on the cross brought us to peace with God; before that sacrifice, only God's love, mercy, grace, and knowledge that Jesus would make all things right, stayed His hand from our full destruction.

Think about the word "peace". What emotions or characteristics stand in opposition to peace?

✚ _____

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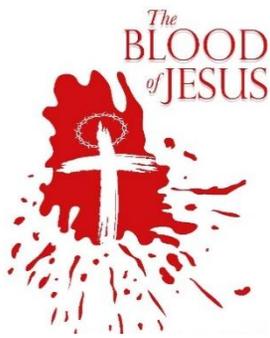
✚ _____

✚ _____

One of the first words that might come to mind is "war". Often, wars begin with rebellion. The people rebel against those who are over them. In the most primary sense, our sinfulness is simply open rebellion against a God who provides all that we need to sustain this life and who would carry us safely into the next. But our sin comes along and rebels against His control over us. We are at war with God.

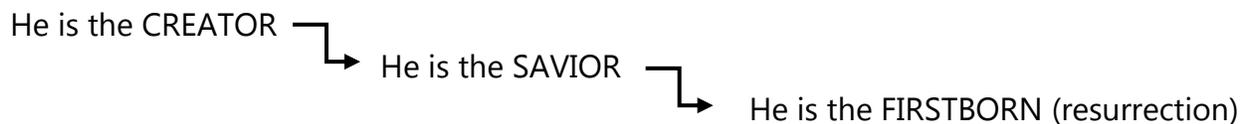
Paul brings depth to our understanding of Jesus' role in quelling that rebellion. His blood is the answer to our sinfulness. His blood restores the peace that we shattered.

Can you think of a hymn or a song that is just a part of you because you know it so well? Are you able to sing along with a song that you heard years ago, still retaining full memory of all (or most) of the words? Most of us would have to answer “yes” to those questions. When words are put to music or given intonation they stick with us. I can still sing songs I learned as a very young child because of the melody that accompanied them. Beginning with verse 15 (verses 15-20) we have what has come to be known as *The Christ Hymn*. In the Greek, this passage has all of the markers of a liturgical song that would have been sung during worship. The people would have been able to recite (sing) this incredibly potent passage for their entire lives. You have to admit, these nine verses seem to carry incredible significance in terms of impressing upon us who Jesus is and what He has done for us. In this passage we are reminded yet again that Jesus was, is, and ever shall be, Holy God.



In this hymn we find Christ exposing the very image of God in His own person. With these words there can be no doubt that Jesus is God, present eternally. Jesus was responsible for Creation while at the same time being the One who was born into humanity through Mary. He is the One who controls the Body (the Church) and has brought that Church back from the evil that came to creation in the Fall. For me, the phrase that carries the most impact from these verses is “*making peace by the blood of His cross*”. The world was created in peace and we brought chaos and sin into it. Jesus restored that peace through His blood death on the cross. Jesus brings peace.

This “hymn” contains a natural progression in its description of Christ and a defense of His supremacy:



When we see the work of Christ in this pattern, we are correctly understanding His position as God and Lord of our lives and the Author of our eternity. Here we find that our peace is restored.

Paul identifies Christ as the image of the invisible God. An image corresponds to its original as an archetype; it resembles it in essential features. The term can be used even to express an identity of essence; thus, Christ is one in essence with the Father. This is affirmed in the Nicene Creed: “being of one substance with the Father.” The term *image* denotes that which is visible. Our Lord Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God; if we would know what the invisible God is like, we must look to that by which he has revealed himself visibly: the incarnate Christ.

Deterding, P. E. ©2003. *Colossians* (p. 50). Saint Louis, MO: CPH.

In a world that seems to be short on peace this is a powerful message. Jesus is the very Author of peace. As Christians, if we are not emulating that peace, perhaps we need to do a little self-evaluation or faith examination. If we are not bringing peace, perhaps we need to reboot and rethink our approach. Only twice in Jesus’ entire story do we see Him do anything that isn’t completely peace-filled, and those two times were both when He over-turned tables in the Temple court. Jesus came to bring peace where we brought strife and sin. His blood alone can and does bring peace.

Psalm 4 – שלום

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

¹Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have given me relief when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

²O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?

How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? *Selah*

³But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him.

⁴Be angry, and do not sin;

ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*

⁵Offer right sacrifices,

and put your trust in the Lord.

⁶There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?"

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!"

⁷You have put more joy in my heart

than they have when their grain and wine abound.

⁸In **peace** I will both lie down and sleep;

for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

שלום

*completeness, soundness,
welfare, peace*



For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through
him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven,

MAKING PEACE BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS.

COLOSSIANS 1:19–20

Look up the following Bible passages and let them inform your understanding *peace*.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **Peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of **Peace**.

⁷Of the increase of his government and of **Peace**
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 32:16-18

¹⁶Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
¹⁷And the effect of righteousness will be **Peace**,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.
¹⁸My people will abide in a **Peaceful** habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Luke 2:14

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **Peace** among those with whom he is pleased!"

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my **Peace** I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 16:32-33

³²Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³I have said these things to you, that in me you may have **Peace**. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have **Peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:14–17

¹⁴For he himself is our **Peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making **Peace**, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached **Peace** to you who were far off and **Peace** to those who were near.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of **Peace** himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Which of these verses helped explain peace to you the best? How has your understanding expanded?

This passage is huge, and I would encourage you to read it over several times. It is worthy of some serious mediation and reflection. Find that phrase or verse that causes you to ask a question or just stops you and demands your attention. That is God message to you for today and within this magnificent passage, you will find something that will give you pause and cause you to praise Him.

