

TITLE: THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

TEXT: COL 1:15-23

THESIS: The purpose of this sermon is to show the supremacy of Christ over all things/people.

INTRO: Prior to teaching that they (we) are complete in Christ (2:10), Paul teaches *why* we could be complete in this person

I. CHRIST IS OVER THE MATERIAL WORLD (v. 15-17):

- A. He is the image of the invisible God (v. 15)
1. Image (icon- representation – **Mt 22:20**–coin w/Caesar’s *image*). Christ is the *image* (physical representation) of God
 2. No wonder he could tell Philip (**Jn 14:9**) that if you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.
 3. God the Father is a spirit (**Jn 4:24**); He Himself is not visible (no man sees His face). But He was manifested in Jesus!
 4. Nothing / nobody is higher (Gnosticism, etc.). No other pursuit will profit anything other than the pursuit of Jesus! Gnosticism, “philosophy and vain deceit” – e.g., “synoptic problem” – perfect example of vain philosophy
- B. He is the firstborn of every creature
1. What this *doesn’t* mean
 - a. It does NOT refer to the chronology of physical creation...(it doesn’t mean Christ was created 1st (or 2nd, or last)! Obviously Christ was not born before Old Testament people.
 - b. It does NOT teach that Christ was *spiritually* created.
Arius (AD 320) taught that Christ *had a beginning*...was a created being, completely subordinate to the Father. BUT, **John 1:1** –“in the beginning was the Word...the Word WAS GOD...(v. 3) ALL things were made by Him that were made! Everything that was created was created by Him. Therefore, He can’t be *part* of creation (v. 16). He existed spiritually before the world was created. (**John 1:14**) “the word BECAME FLESH!” Gnosticism says that Jesus did *not* come in the flesh.
 2. What this *does* mean
 - a. Superiority, not seniority (e.g., the most qualified employee gets the promotion, not the one w/most seniority)
 - b. *Firstborn* of all creation (more general use than in v. 18). It should be seen in contrast to “firstborn” in v. 18.
 - c. First or *highest* in supremacy, rank or title. The firstborn son received a double portion of inheritance (**Dt 21:17**).
 - d. Again, it does NOT mean that He was the first created of all creation. He created everything (v. 16)...
- C. Purpose of this “superiority” discussion
1. ALL things were created by him, *and FOR Him* (v. 16)
 - a. By Him – Christ created everyone and everything (in heaven, earth; thrones, rulers, authorities)
 - b. For Him – to be governed by Him
 - c. Where are you going for your authority? Philosophers? Judaizing teachers? Gnostics? Christ is superior to ALL!!

II. CHRIST IS OVER THE SPIRITUAL WORLD (v. 18-20):

- A. His spiritual position (v. 18-19)
1. (v. 18) He is the Head of the body/church. Our physical bodies operate based on the instructions of the head...The head tells the hand to do something. The hand doesn’t disobey! Also, only 1 head/1 body...not a Siamese church!
 2. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. The firstborn again!
 - a. He wasn’t the first person resurrected (Elisha-widow’s son- 2 Kings 4). Many were raised from the dead at Jesus’ death (Mt 27:52-53). But all these died again. Jesus is the 1st to be raised from the dead, *never* to die again!
 - b. Jesus was risen, and became the firstfruits of them that slept (**1 Cor 15:20**). Like the firstfruits of Harvest were a sign of the abundant harvest to come, so Jesus was the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest that will be. Faithful Christians will rise from the dead, never to die again, just like Christ. (**Rom 8:29** - the firstborn among many brethren).
 3. (v. 19) He is complete, fully sufficient, he needs no supplement, no alternate system
- B. His spiritual purpose (v. 20) – to reconcile...He is the agent of reconciliation (a bringing back together), by making peace. His purpose was to die, that His blood might bring peace & reconciliation. But this requires obedience by each individual.

III. CHRIST IS OVER THE INDIVIDUAL (21-23):

- A. (v. 21) Even though you were once alienated & enemies because of the evil (internal & external), he reconciled you (v. 20)
- B. (v. 22) Where? In the body of his flesh
- C. How? Through His death
- D. Why? To present you holy and unblameable an unreprouvable
- E. **IF!** (v. 23)- We must continue in the faith, grounded (foundation laid; made stable) & settled (steadfast; immovable) Necessity of foundation (the foundation for the Petronas Towers in KL is 180 feet deep! www.kiat.net/towers/reality.html)

CONCLUSION: It is because of Christ's supremacy over ALL creation, over ALL physical/material things, over ALL spiritual things, over the Church, over each Individual...it is because of these things that Paul reveals the mystery in v. 27 – "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And this is what he warns every man and teaches every man in v. 28. ***If Christ is not in you, there is NO hope of glory! When is Christ in you? When you are in Him! This happens at baptism (Gal 3:27).