

Sunday, May 10, 2020—Colossians 1:17-18 The Preeminence of Christ

Announcements

- Welcome to the Grace Life Bible Church live stream.
 - Teaching directly to the saints of GLBC & others who want to join in.
 - Feel free to comment on the video but I will not be engaging with the audience in real time.
 - Focus on my notes and delivering the message.
- I would like to begin with some announcements.
 - Corona Comfort Playlist on the Church YouTube playlist.
 - Fred Curtis is not doing well. Send them to Fred Curtis, SKLD Healthcare, 2320 East Beltline SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546, Room 201.
 - Janette Nickels and Brad Suderman have recently tested positive for COVID. Marshe, Brad's wife is under self-quarantine. As of now Marshe is no showing and symptoms.
 - Blake Donaldson—Teen Lessons
- Things to keep in mind this week.
 - Wednesday @ 7:00 pm—Mid-Week Message
 - Friday @ 7:00 pm—Living the Transformed Life on Zoom. Anyone from the local assembly is invited. Be sure I have your current email address by Noon on Friday if you want to join.
 - Offerings can be made on the church's website via PayPal by clicking on the Donate Button under Support our Ministry. Checks can be mailed to Daryl Doornbos our treasurer at his home. He can deposit them using technology without leaving his home.
 - A One-Anothering Fund has been set up to help saints from Grace Life Bible Church who may be struggling financially. If you are in need of assistance, please contact me or Daryl Dornboos. Your request will be kept confidential.

Introduction

- Two weeks ago, during our time together we studied Colossians 1:16. Last Sunday I addressed some follow up questions that folks had. In summation we observed the following points:
 - **For by him were all things created**—Christ is “the firstborn of every creature” (v. 15) because “by him were all things created” in verse 16. The creation is contingent upon Christ. Christ is not contingent upon creation (John 1:1-3).
 - The Lord Jesus Christ created all the governmental positions of rank and authority in heaven (“invisible”) and earth (“visible”). They were created by created by Christ and for Christ.
 - Ephesians 1:10, 20-23; 3:9-11—the eternal purpose of God was to center all things in heaven and earth under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be accomplished on the earth through the nation of Israel and in the heavenly places through the body of Christ.

Colossians 1:17

- **And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**
- This passage has been talking about the Lord Jesus Christ since Paul mentioned the “kingdom of his dear Son” in verse 13.
 - Verse 14—in Christ we have redemption through his blood & the forgiveness of sins.
 - Verse 15—Christ is the image of the invisible God & the firstborn of every creature.
 - Verse 16—Christ created the governmental positions of rank and authority for himself.
- This entire passage is about the supremacy of Christ.
- **And he is before all things**—if Christ created the “all things” mentioned in verse 16, then he had to be “before” them or preexist them in verse 17. Once again, the creation is contingent upon Christ. Christ is not contingent upon creation.
 - John 1:1-3—without Christ was not “anything made that was made.”
- **and by him all things consist**—not only was Christ before all things, not only did Christ create all things, Paul goes a step further to tell us that “by him all things consist.”
- The English word “consist” carries the following relevant meaning according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*:

- To stand together; to be in a fixed or permanent state, as a body composed of parts in union or connection. Hence, to be; to exist; to subsist; to be supported and maintained.
 - He was before all things, and by him all things consist Colossians 1:17.
- Creation is banded together, supported, and maintained by the one who created it the Lord Jesus Christ, “by him all things consist” and are held together.
- Have you ever heard of “laminin”? Laminin is the cell adhesion molecule.
 - The laminin family of glycoproteins are an integral part of the structural scaffolding in almost every tissue of an organism.
 - Laminin is literally the stuff that binds us together.
- Considering Colossians 1:17, would it surprise you to learn that laminin the cellular glue by which we are supported and maintained as human beings is literally in the shape of a cross.
 - Show images
- It is solely due to the sustaining work of Christ that creation doesn’t just fall apart and cease to exist.

Colossians 1:18

- **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.**
- **And he is the head of the body, the church**—as if verses 14 through 17 weren’t enough, Paul adds to Christ’s credentials that he is the head of the body, the church.
 - Colossians 1:24
 - Ephesians 1:20-23
 - Ephesians 4:15-16
 - Ephesians 5:23
 - I Corinthians 13:12-24
 - Romans 12:3-5

- Colossians 1:18—all justified people are members of “the church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:22-23) of which Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22). In each geographic region, West Michigan for example, the justified members of the body of Christ gather together to form the local church. The body of Romans and I Corinthians is the body of Ephesians and Colossians.
- **who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead**—we previously touched upon this portion of verse 18 when we were looking at Paul’s use of the word “firstborn” in verse 15. Noah *Webster’s American Dictionary of the English Language* records two definitions for the word “firstborn.”
 - First brought forth; first in the order of nativity; eldest; as the first-born son.
 - Matthew 1:25
 - Luke 2:7
 - Hebrews 11:28
 - Most excellent; most distinguished or exalted. Christ is called the first-born of every creature. Colossians 1:1.
- It in this second sense, “most excellent, most distinguished or exalted” that Christ is “the firstborn of every creature” in verse 15 and “the firstborn from the dead” in verse 18.
- Colossians 1:18—Paul states that Christ is the “firstborn from the dead.” Does this mean that Jesus was first in time to be raised from the dead? No, we know that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.
 - John 11:43-44—but what ultimately happened to Lazarus? He died again.
 - Romans 6:9—Christ’s resurrection was superior to that of Lazarus because Christ didn’t die a second time but was rather exalted far above all principality and power in both this and the world to come (Eph. 1:20-21).
- Colossians 1:18—so Christ is the “firstborn from the dead” in the sense that his resurrection is “the most excellent, most distinguished or exalted.” Not only that but Christ’s resurrection also secures our resurrection.
 - Romans 4:25
 - I Corinthians 15:20-23—Christ’s resurrection from the dead secured the promise of resurrection in the eternal purpose of God.
 - Hebrews 11:17-19

- **that in all things he might have the preeminence**—the purpose and intent of verses 14 through 18 is that Christ “might have the preeminence” in all things. The Greek word rendered “preeminence” means “to be first, hold the first place.”
- *Oxford English Dictionary*
 - Higher rank or distinction; priority of place, precedence; primacy; superiority.
- *American Dictionary of the English Language*
 - Superior in excellence; distinguished for something commendable or honorable.
 - Surpassing others in evil or bad qualities; as pre-eminent in crime or guilt.