



## Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus is supreme over all things, and only He has the power and authority to reconcile all things to Himself.

*Colossians 1:15-29*

### ANNOUNCE

Marriage bottle feb. 19

baby bottles - next Sunday

Ken 25 years

### ILLUSTRATION

I want to paint a picture that we won't come back to until the end of the sermon, but I want you to keep it in mind.

In farming, there is a term called a "cover crop." Now, farmers, please don't get upset with me if I don't get all the terminology correct. Cover crops are not typically for harvesting but are planted for the purposes of pest control, protecting and cultivating the soil, and controlling weeds. Michigan State University put out a study on the potential benefits of mustard plants as an effective cover crop because of their makeup and ability to detract insects, suppress weeds, and insert vital nutrients into the soil.

The Gallillian countryside knows a thing or two about mustard plants. In the springtime, they **thrive on every hillside** along the Sea of Galilee. I've held the seeds in my hand—they're very beautiful. It's safe to say that if you had a field that was ridden with pests and weeds, you could plant mustard plants in it, and they would take over, pushing everything else out.

Jesus likened the kingdom of God to the Mustard seed. You may wonder how that's relevant to today's passage, but we will bring it full circle at the end.

## BIBLE PASSAGE

### Colossians 1:15-29 (NKJV - New King James Version)

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

<sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

<sup>18</sup> And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

<sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

<sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

<sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

<sup>24</sup> I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

<sup>25</sup> of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

<sup>26</sup> the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

<sup>27</sup> To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

<sup>28</sup> Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

## APPLICATION

As Paul continues writing in verse 15, he hits another transition point.

- **Verses 9-11 - What we do in response to God's will.**
- **Verses 12-14 - What God has done for us and apart from us.**
- **Verses 15-19 - The Supremacy and Sovereignty of Jesus. (Who He is and what He rules)**
- **Verses 20-23 - The Sacrifice of Jesus. (what He reconciles)**
- **Verses 23-29 - The Service of Jesus. (Who He uses)**

## APPLICATION

My first introduction to progressive Christianity happened years ago by accident when I was in a bookstore's Christian book section. I came across a release by author and “pastor” Philip Gulley.

The book is called, **“The Evolution of the Christian Faith: How God is Creating a Better Christianity.”**

I was deeply disheartened and even angered as I started to flip through the chapters.

Here's what the intro says, **“For many, the concepts of original sin, a God who sends people to hell, and Jesus as the only path to God can no longer be stomached... Only when we break free from the tenets of Christianity that no longer further the faith can we create a vital and believable Christianity—a Christianity that brings out the best in us, not the worst.”**

This is only one of many frightening examples that I found that day. People who call themselves Christians are trying to redefine Jesus. They call the Jesus of the Bible “antiquated” and “implausible.”

So they removed the authority of scripture and recreated their own Jesus, who matched the way they saw the world. And it is straight from the pit of Hell and the mind of Satan. Make no mistake about it: Satan is bent on twisting the identity and power of Christ to His own narrative.

Now, I am not a religious basher, but I feel it necessary today, due to the subject we are about to broach, that we look at some of the deceptive doctrines that you are most likely to encounter in your own life concerning the person of Jesus.

### **What do the Mormons believe about Jesus?**

From their main website

***“Jesus Christ is the literal Son of God. His birth, life, death, and resurrection fulfilled the many prophecies contained in the scriptures concerning the coming of a Savior. He was the Creator, He is our Savior, and He will be our Judge.”***

The Mormons keep getting better over the years at disguising themselves!

It takes some further digging into their holy scriptures and doctrinal books to find out what they really believe behind all of the masked, evangelicalized language:

- **Literal Son of God:**

Mormons believe Jesus is the literal Son of God the Father, both spiritually and physically. They teach that God the Father has a physical, glorified body, and Jesus is His firstborn spirit child.

- **Pre-Mortal Existence:**

Jesus existed as a spirit before His earthly life. In this pre-mortal existence, He was known as **Jehovah** and is considered the elder brother of all human beings, including Lucifer.

- **Distinct from God the Father:**

Unlike the traditional Christian view of the Trinity, Mormons believe Jesus, the Father

(Heavenly Father), and the Holy Ghost are three separate beings, united in purpose but not in substance.

***“I will preach on the plurality of Gods... The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit.”***

— *Doctrine and Covenants 130:22*

In other words, He is the firstborn spirit child of God the Father...He is the Son of God, literally, actually, as men are the sons of mortal parents...”

### **What do Jehovah’s Witnesses believe about Jesus?**

They are not as subtle about what they believe.

- Christ is God's Son and is inferior to Him
- Christ was the first of God's creations
- Christ died on a stake, not a cross
- Christ's human life was paid as a ransom for obedient humans
- Christ was raised from the dead as an immortal spirit person, not in the flesh.

We could go on and on, but wherever you see a distortion of the gospel, it also contains a distortion of the person of Jesus, his supremacy, divinity, exclusivity (only way), and His sovereignty.

## **1 The Supremacy of Jesus (Who He is)**

### **A. IMAGE OF THE ETERNAL, INVISIBLE GOD (15)**

**Verse 15 - He is the image of the invisible God.**

**Verse 17 - He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

**Verse 19 - all the fullness dwells.**

Let's take our theological hats off momentarily and use common sense. Who would you think of if you just heard me describing the one that was before everything else was? The one in whom all the fullness dwells? You'd probably say that sounds a lot like God! Exactly. No, the word trinity is not found in our Bibles, but the equality and oneness of Jesus the Son and the Father is clearly expressed throughout the Bible.

Image of the invisible God—I hate to break this down to such menial terms, but God sent us a selfie! He expressed himself in a format you and I could understand, interpret, and interact with! When Paul says the "image of the invisible God," he wasn't simply saying, "Jesus represented God as best as he could." No, he uses the phrase "invisible God" on purpose.

#### **BIBLE PASSAGE**

### **John 1:18 (NKJV - New King James Version)**

<sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

#### **APPLICATION**

You and I can't see God in the Spirit, so God showed us himself in the flesh.

- The word image was the word used to describe the image of an emperor on his coinage. One Bible commentator puts it like this: Jesus is the exact stamp of God's nature in human flesh.
- The Bible says we are being renewed and sanctified into the image of Christ, but our representation will always be marred because of our sinful nature. Jesus had no sin nature because of His divine nature. Because the nature of God was fully vested in Him, he was the exact image of God's nature.

Speaking of Jesus, listen to how he puts it in even more precise terms in Hebrews 1:

**BIBLE PASSAGE****Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV - New King James Version)**

<sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

**APPLICATION**

**Express image – haractare - It means the exact expression.** Not only does he convey the very nature and character of God, but He expresses the authority of God as well – “Upholding all things by the word of His power.”

This is why Paul clarifies further in verse **19: It pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.**

- The gnostic thought of the day was that the "fullness" of God was manifested in different levels of secret knowledge. Jesus was one manifestation of the divine consciousness, but only part of the puzzle.
- Here, Paul makes it clear, "No, Jesus is the whole picture!"
- In chapter 2:9, he reiterates: **[Col 2:9 NKJV] 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;**

Today, there's a very popularized idea (that's not really new. It's just repackaged garbage) that has to do with "The Christ Consciousness." Perhaps you've heard that there is a Christ consciousness that Jesus attained, and we can all tap into that Christ consciousness as well. That's complete blasphemy. Jesus didn't attain a Christ consciousness; he didn't attain a higher plain through meditation, and he didn't earn Godhood through righteous acts.

Jesus had the full nature of the invisible God in his personhood, fully God and fully man.

**APPLICATION**

While Jesus was speaking to Phillip in John 14, Phillip asked Jesus a question – show us the Father? Jesus replied, **“If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.”**

## APPLICATION

Paul wants the church in Colosse to fully appreciate this because, in chapter 2, he will apply it to the Christian's identity. If the fullness of God is already in Jesus, then Jesus is all you need to become a complete person.

## B. CREATOR AND SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS (16)

**[Col 1:16 NKJV] 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.**

Notice the triple emphasis:

- **By Him** - He is One with the Father and the Spirit in the work of creation. Paul wants us to understand that He is the source of all things that exist.
- **Through Him** - The reason for which something is done - At no point was Jesus, the son, bypassed in the work of creation.
- **For Him** - All created things exist for the purpose of bringing glory to Jesus.

**[Col 1:17 NKJV] 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

Before ALL things - I think we could safely say that if Jesus were created, he wouldn't exist before ALL things because he would be in the category of ALL things. By saying that He IS (present) before all things speak to an eternity in His nature. Before anything created existed, Jesus was, with no beginning or end.

In Him, all things exist - the word literally implies that he is the force by which creation continues to exist. I like how AT Robertson puts it:

***“The permanence of the universe rests, then, on Christ far more than on gravity. It is a Christ-centric universe.”***



## ALL THINGS

Paul categorizes these as not to leave out any:

- In heaven and on earth
- Visible and invisible
- Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers.

**Here is the implication:** There are things in this universe that we can see and things we can't. There are powers and authorities we can see and ones we can't. Jesus is the creator and sustainer of them all.

### 1. THE VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE DISPLAYS HIS INFINITE POWER

Sometimes, just to remind myself of how ignorant I am, I read articles about quantum physics and black holes. I don't understand a lick of it... but I've also come to learn that all the men and women who can speak the scientific language don't really understand what's going on either! But the more we discover, the more the words of David make greater sense: **[Psa 19:1 NKJV] - *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.***

- The observable universe is 93 billion light-years wide, and yet, we have barely scratched the surface of its mysteries.
- There are more stars in the universe than grains of sand on Earth. Scientists estimate 200 billion trillion stars ( $2 \times 10^{23}$  stars)!
- Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, contains an estimated 100-400 billion stars—and it's just one of at least two trillion galaxies in the known universe!
- The James Webb Space Telescope recently revealed galaxies that shouldn't exist based on current scientific models, reminding us that God's creation is beyond our understanding.

### How Big is the Universe?

If you could travel at the speed of light (186,282 miles per second):

- It would take 1.3 seconds to reach the Moon.

- It would take 8 minutes to reach the Sun.
- It would take 4 years to reach the closest star, Proxima Centauri.
- It would take 100,000 years to cross just the Milky Way galaxy.
- To reach the edge of the observable universe? 46 billion years. Even at the fastest possible speed, we could never reach the edge of what God has created in our lifetime.

**Genesis 1:16 - he made the stars also...**

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## 2. THE COMPLEXITY OF NATURE DISPLAYS HIS DIVINE WISDOM

- The human eye can distinguish at least a million different shades of color and process information faster than any camera ever built.
- A single honeybee hive must visit 2 million flowers and travel 56,000 miles of combined flying to make one pound of honey—yet their navigational ability is more precise than any GPS.
- A spider's web is stronger than steel when compared by weight, and scientists are still trying to replicate its incredible properties.
- A single DNA strand in your body contains over 3 billion letters of genetic code, enough to fill 600,000 pages of books... and there are approximately 1.71 quadrillion DNA strands in your body (that's 1 with 15 zeros behind it)!

Yet, the best explanation science comes up with is that it was all "designed" through a process of random accidents and chance. Against all statistical odds, order came out of chaos? I think not. Wrap all that genius into one mind, and it's in Jesus Christ!

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## 3. THE MYSTERY OF THE HUMAN MIND DISPLAYS HIS UNSEARCHABLE KNOWLEDGE

- Your brain contains **86 billion neurons**, each connected to **thousands of others**, creating **1,000 trillion synaptic connections**—more than the number of stars in the Milky Way!
- The brain processes information faster than the most advanced supercomputer and can store 2.5 petabytes of data (enough to hold 3 million hours of TV shows - though I recommend that you use them for something more beneficial).

- Yet, for all of our scientific measurements and knowledge, Scientists still can't explain how consciousness works, how we dream, how memory retrieves information instantly, or how we, as humans, uniquely have an awareness of ourselves and our consciousness.

#### 4. THE HIDDEN REALITIES DISPLAY HIS INVISIBLE POWER

.Paul says Jesus created all things visible and invisible. That means there are realities beyond our senses that we cannot even comprehend:

- Scientists estimate that 95% of the universe is made up of something unseen—dark matter and dark energy. They have no idea what it is, but they know it holds galaxies together. They will be surprised one day when they realize that the God-particle they were searching for was actually God!
- The theoretical studies of Quantum Mechanics suggest that at the subatomic level, particles defy logic—they can be in two places at once and interact without touching. There are even serious discussions now about parallel universes.
  - Well, if there is, Jesus is the one that holds it all together!
- On top of the unknown physical components of the universe, there are the unseen spiritual components of reality. Spiritual beings, demons, and angels, heaven and hell... you think we're still ignorant about visible nature... humanity has no clue about what's going on in the unseen spiritual realm.
- There is clearly so much more than what we have scratched the surface trying to discover; it will continue to expose how powerful, creative, and awesome our Jesus is!

The SUPREMECY of Jesus is in His person, God, creator, and sustainer made flesh.

## 2 The Sovereignty of Jesus (What He rules)

## AUTHORITY

WHO Jesus is implies the power that He has. Everything that exists operates under authority. Every power has a greater power that rules over it. There are certain "laws of physics" that seem to rule over reality until you get into the singularity of a black hole. Apparently, there are more undiscovered laws that rule in that space. The kings of the earth and those in authority are being led by other, unseen powers, either good or evil. And those unseen powers are also under authority. So the big question is, "For the physical and spiritual worlds, where does the buck stop?" Good news for the Christian... the buck stops with King Jesus, who has the final say over everything.

**[Mat 28:18 NKJV] 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**

### A. OVER ALL PHYSICAL CREATION (15)

He is the firstborn OVER creation:

This is where many of the cults get all mixed up. They assume that firstborn means that Jesus was the first one created.

The operative word here is the word "over"

- John 17:2 - translated "over" in the context of Jesus' authority over all flesh.

Cultures fail to acknowledge that Greek and Hebrew words often can have more than one implication. And so it is with the word "firstborn."

"Firstborn" can mean "The first in a sequence." But many times in scripture, the firstborn is used as **"a title that speaks of position, not sequential order."**

- The firstborn son was the one who had the right of inheritance. All authority of the father and the family rested in the hands of the firstborn.
- That's why Jesus is the firstborn OVER all creation. Jesus has the position of total and complete authority over every created thing.

There are a couple of incidents in the Old Testament when we see that the one who had the position of the firstborn was not the one who was born first.

## ISAAC'S TWO SONS - JACOB AND ESAU

Esau was the one born first, but through several strange events, Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing of the firstborn by buying the birthright from his brother. As a result, the blessing and inheritance of the firstborn came through Jacob even though he was not the first in order.

In Exodus, God calls Jacob (or Israel) His “firstborn.”

## MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM:

Later, Jacob's son Joseph had two sons named Manasseh and Ephraim. At the end of Jacob's life, Joseph brought his sons to him in order to receive his blessing.

- Manasseh was the firstborn, so Joseph placed Manasseh on the right side (right hand of blessing) and Ephraim on his left.
- But Jacob, for some reason, decided to cross his hands. He laid the left hand on the firstborn and the right hand on the youngest, and as a result, Ephraim gained the position of the firstborn.

We also see this idea reflected in the Psalms when God speaks to King David, also prophetically of Christ Jesus:

**Psalm 89:27 - I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.**

## APPLICATION

Jesus has the highest place of authority over physical creation. When He says it's time for this universe to end, the Bible says the elements will melt away with fervent heat.

- Jesus commanded storms. Who is this, that the wind and the sea obey Him? He is their creator.

## B. OVER ALL SPIRITUAL CREATION (16)

Thrones, Dominions, principalities, and powers...

I'm not going to launch into demonology or angelology this morning, but suffice it to say that the Bible makes it clear that there are both visible and invisible powers. In fact, many visible powers are under the influence of the invisible powers.

**[Eph 6:12 NKJV] 12 For 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.**

Sometimes, when we are amid these wrestling and battles, it feels as though the powers of darkness will triumph. That's when we need to remember that those powers are subject to a higher authority, and that Jesus, the king of kings, has rendered them defeated, and it's only a matter of time until he displays the fullness of His wrath and judgment against them.

**[Col 2:15 NKJV] 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.**

## C. OVER THE CHURCH (18)

**[Col 1:18 NKJV] 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning...**

### BIBLE PASSAGE

## Ephesians 1:22-23 (NKJV - New King James Version)

<sup>22</sup> And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

## APPLICATION

The head means two things:

1. **Source**
2. **Authority**

**Jesus is the source** - much like the headwaters of a river, Jesus feeds the body of Christ. It's only when the body is connected to and receiving from the head that it can grow and function in a healthy way. When a church starts to look to other sources for wisdom, strength, or vision, it will become cancerous and spiritually atrophied.

**Jesus is the authority** - Only the head gets to tell the body what to do, where to go, what to say, etc. The church doesn't receive its marching orders from culture, society, politicians, or even the creative vision of a pastor. If we aren't following Jesus first, His words, His ways, His heart, His teachings, His mission, and His commands, we are a body in rebellion! Do you know what medical science calls a body in rebellion? CANCER. AUTO-IMMUNE. that's not the kind of church we want to aim to become!

## D. OVER DEATH (18)

**the firstborn from the dead that in all things He may have the preeminence.**

Firstborn from the dead – Jesus has authority over death. Again, was Jesus the first person to ever be raised from the dead? No, many were raised before Him.

- There are at least 8 people in the OT and NT that were raised from the dead by the power of God.
- But there's only one who raised himself to never die again, displaying ultimate power and authority over the power of death!

He was raised by His power so that he might have **“the preeminence.”**

**Preeminence – To hold the highest place of authority.**

### 3 The Sacrifice of Jesus

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#### BIBLE PASSAGE

### Colossians 1:19-20 (NKJV - New King James Version)

<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

<sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

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#### BIBLE PASSAGE

**[2Co 5:19 NKJV] 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...**

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#### APPLICATION

This is where we will pick up next week, but it's a bridge verse in that it caps off what was before and it intros what's next. Notice these words:

- How many things is He reconciling to Himself? ALL
- Things on earth or things in heaven.

Sound familiar? Who have we established as the creator of all things? Who have we established as the sustainer of all things? Who have we established as the authority over all things? Jesus! So our question is WHY? ***Why does the creator, sustainer and king have to reconcile to himself what already belongs to Him?***



This is a good question with an incredible answer. No earthly example fully encapsulates the answer, but let me take us to a field.

- If I own a field, plant it, landscape it, irrigate it, etc., who does the field belong to? Me.
- If I entrust the care of the field to people who have free will and intentionally turn against me, destroy what I've built, and plant weeds in my field, who owns the field? Still me. Who will have to root out the weeds now and rebuild the structures? Me.
- Who knows, I might even **plant a mustard seed** to drive out all those weeds.

This is God's universe, God's world, and human beings are created in God's image. But built into God's design is the free will of its creatures, both spiritual and physical. Where there is free will, there is the potential of rebellion and destruction from the original intent and design. Satan rebelled, deceived Eve and Adam, sin entered God's creation, sin brought for death, and sin and death reigned from Adam to Christ.

But God's plan was not to abandon his field but to reclaim it, or as Paul puts it, "**reconcile all things to Himself.**"

- **Reconcile - to bring back a former state of harmony**

You could say that through Jesus, God is in the process of pushing out all the weeds. He's doing that by redeeming sinners (as we'll see next week), planting kingdom seeds that blossom, and pushing out the weeds around them. It will all culminate one day in His return when He will finish establishing His kingdom on earth. One day, there will be a great judgment, and the defiling things that refused to come back under the authority of the rightful king will be confined to an eternal location called Hell.

You see, hell is tragic, but it's also necessary. God's redeemed, reconciled Kingdom has no room for that which would bring hell back into its human existence; therefore, it has to be eternally contained. How many of you in here would feel good about rerouting your sewer line into your shower? God won't do it either in His kingdom.

But HOW does he bring about this renewed harmony, this reconciliation? Paul says "through the body of His flesh (22) and the blood of His cross (20)."

- WE CLOSE WITH THIS THOUGHT - why the body of Jesus? Why the blood of His sacrifice?

***Because only the One who created all things can possess the power to restore all things.***

**This means that if anyone hears a message who is far from God, lost in rebellion, and contaminated with sin, there is only one who has the power, authority, and merit to reconcile you back to God... Jesus Christ. May you acknowledge and confess Him today as your creator, your sustainer, and your king!**