

Colossians 1:15-23

Apologies all for the unimaginative lay out; I'm not brilliant at it, but will try and make it a bit more easy on the eye next time!

Notes on the text

We've only got a few notes this week, as the text is not overly difficult; the main point about the supremacy of Christ is bold! There are just some points of clarification and interest.

v15 and 19 "Image of the invisible God...all the fullness of God"

Paul makes the point here that Jesus *is* fully God; there is fullness in Him, and therefore fullness is to be found nowhere else. vv16, 17 and 18 serve as the meat in this sandwich explaining in what way Jesus is fully God.

v16 "All things were created through him and for him"

Jesus is both creator and the purpose of creation; He was present with God at the creation (cf John 1:1) and therefore his *supremacy* over all things derives from his *creation* of all things.

v20 "...reconcile to himself all things"

The cross is so powerful that not only are God's people, the Church(v18) reconciled to Him, so the creation that was broken at the fall is reconciled. This has implications both on i) our view of the power of the Cross and Jesus' blood. Since it is the blood of the creator, then of course it is powerful for the creation. li) It shapes our view of Creation, and means that we are freed up to live in it and to enjoy it. We need not be ashamed of enjoying the good things God has given us in it, and more than that, since it is Christ's we can live in it with confidence

v22 "And you...he has now reconciled"

Paul focuses down the cosmic scope of his writing onto the Colossians themselves, and includes them in the supremacy and work of Christ. This is a very liberating truth if we understand it rightly, for it means we are freed up to live as Christ's people in His world, and therefore every area of life becomes open to a distinctively Christ-like approach. We can engage with our philosopher friend confidently as Christ is the Lord of philosophy, and we are his; we can speak gospel truth about films and music, as Christ is the Lord of that, and we are his. This is true of the whole sphere of life, visible and invisible. Praise the Lord!

The Study

The Big Idea

Jesus is the supreme Lord over the whole creation, visible and invisible, and has reconciled the whole Creation to God through His death. In view of this, and their own reconciliation to God through Christ, believers should not move away from Jesus but should instead stand firm in the truth of the gospel.

Aim of the study: to magnify our view of Christ, so that we would give him the glory and worship he deserves so that we might remain steadfast in Him, not influenced by the World

Opening activity

In 20 words, write down an answer to the question “Who is Jesus?” *Gets us thinking about Christ; then you can return to this at the end and see if people’s views have changed at all*

Ponder (*Question aimed to get us into the application of the text*)

What would people say was supreme over your life? What would they say shaped your thoughts and actions?

What things in the world tempt us to move away from Jesus as our supreme authority?

Big Questions for 1:15-20

What is Jesus Lord over? Why is He supreme over Creation? What are the implications of Him being the Creator, and the purpose of Creation? Why does Paul tell us He is the “Firstborn from among the dead?”

What implications are there in the fact that Jesus has reconciled *all things*, not just his people, by his death? Does this change our attitude to Creation?

Application: How should we live in the light of the truths in these verses?

Big Questions for 1:21-23

What is so amazing about the fact that Jesus reconciles people to God? In view of this, and the fact that the Christian is a reconciled person living in a reconciled world, how should we live our lives? Why is it sensible to remain firm in the faith?

Application: Think back to the original question; **when we think of the things that pressure us to remove Christ as our supreme focus and authority in life, how should we view them in the light of His Lordship?** How does He compare as Lord to the things of this world?

What are the effects for us of understanding that the world is Christ’s as well as us? How does that shape the way we engage with the world and our friends?