

As Colossians began, Paul's emphasis in chapter one focused on his thankfulness for the believers in Colossae, whom he'd never met. From an outpouring of his thankfulness for their walk, he then communicated his heart and discipline of habitual prayer on their behalf. In the midst of Paul's prayer response toward the Colossians is a powerful depiction of who Jesus is and what He has done for those who believe.

Colossians 1:15-23

The Preeminence of Christ

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

Most people, Christian or not, would agree that Jesus was a man who walked the earth. Whether or not he existed is generally not up for a lot of debate. The point most argued is whether or not he is who he said. Was (is) Jesus the Son of God, or is he more likely a moral teacher? Our response to the question says a lot about our worldview.

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

HOW often do you contemplate the character of Christ?

ARE there specific attributes of Jesus you admire more than others? **WHICH** ones and **WHY**?

HOW would you describe Jesus' relationship to God, creation, and us (the church)?

WHAT difference does understanding the character of Christ make in worshiping God?

Colossians 1:15-23

The Preeminence of Christ

Read Colossians 1:15-23

OBSERVATION

What does this section say Christ **IS**?

What does this section say Christ **HAS DONE**?

According to vs. 21, what does Paul say **WAS TRUE** of those in Colossae?

In vs. 22, what do you observe is **NOW TRUE** for those in Colossae and *how* was this achieved?

Describe the purpose of their new standing, for those in Colossae, observed in vs. 22-23.

INTERPRETATION

What does vs. 15 mean when Jesus is referred to as the “firstborn”? Keep in mind the context of this passage (1:17-18) and Consider Hebrews 1:1-3 and Romans 8:29, Psalm 89:24-28 for insight.

What role did Jesus have in creation, and why is this significant in recognizing who He is? (Consider Genesis 1:1-3, 26).

What purpose does vs. 18 serve? What does Paul mean when he refers to Christ as the firstborn from among the dead? See also 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 1 Thess. 4:14.

Why do you think Paul emphasizes the identity of Christ in vs. 19 (and later in 2:9) particularly to the Colossians who were inundated with gnostic heresy? (Remember, how did Gnostics view the physical?)

Define “reconcile” as we see it in vs. 22, and explain how this has taken place in the Colossians and us today.

Describe what Paul means as he stresses the importance of continuing in the faith (vs. 23). How does he stress a similar charge in other places in scripture? Consider Galatians 5:16-25, Ephesians 5:1-2 for starters.

APPLICATION

What practical steps can we take to encourage one another to continue in our faith, established and firm, not moving from the hope found in the Gospel?