

Colossians 1.15-23 “Sovereign of the Cosmos, Savior of the Church”

Why Spend TIME Reading 2000 yr old Letter to Place cannot FIND?

By man KICKED Out of Most Places he Visited > Locked in Prison?

Faith Commitment > God’s Word thru Spokesman of Risen Jesus X

Believe WORD of GOD – Maker SPEAKS to US > OWNERS Manual

Why out of 66 books in Bible > THIS Book of Colossians

2 Great Needs > 1. Great VISION of Jesus – World thinks J is JOKE

Paul FEEL at His Feet > Damascus Road, Blinded – John/Patmos, Peter

2. HOW to Live for Jesus – think MISSING Something, Xtra Blessing?

Need to Have ANOTHER Experience? Special Teacher? New Apostle?

Apostle Paul writing from Prison in Rome to Town in Southern Turkey

Apostle to Gentiles to Church in Colossae > Never Been > Most Unknown

1st C letter Opens w/ Greetings, Prayers, Good Wishes > NOW What?

Not Surprising > LEADS with Jesus > HE is of 1st Importance

APOSTLE > Speaks WORDS of Jesus > SENT with Authority of Jesus

Vs. 1-14 PRAYER for Colossian Xtians > No sense of DEFICIENCY

Have KNOWLEDGE & POWER of God in their Lives

Likely feeling LACKING Something came from FALSE TEACHERS

NEED New Ministry, Anointing, Experience, Gift, Prophet, Booster

PRAYER > Know how God has FILLED You w/ All Need in Christ

NOT Surprising > Next Thing TEACHES in Letter >> JESUS!

PASTORAL Wisdom > No matter WHAT is Going On, City, Church

Paul NOT Point Finger @ Sinners or False Teachers > Upward to Jesus

Knowing Jesus – Safety, Strength, Supply, Satisfaction, Salvation

Colossians NEW Believers > Need to BUILD on Foundation of Jesus

Wants them to be Confident in SUPREMACY & SUFFICIENCY of X

1. Lord of the Cosmos: Creation

v. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Paul REACHES back to Beginning of Bible for Descriptive LANGUAGE

Power of Almighty God SEEN Fully in Jesus Christ

GLORY of INVISIBLE God now DISPLAYED in Face of Jesus Christ

“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known” John 1.14,18

‘image’ Gk wd ICON > Jesus is EXACT Image > PORTRAIT of Father

Jesus to Philip... “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” John 14.9

FIRSTBORN – NOT Teaching Jesus was CREATED, or had Beginning

Jesus 2nd Member of TRINITY > Eternal God – Uncreated, No Beginning

FB = HEIR of Father > FIRST in Rank – IMPORTANCE of Position

As Firstborn Jesus is BOTH the MODEL and the HEAD of Humanity

v. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,

One who SUFFERED on Cross > SPOKE the CREATION into Being

CHRIST is CREATOR of All THINGS > Wind & Waves OBEY Him

WHOLE Created Order – All Time & Space – Owes Existence to X

v. 16 “visible and invisible” – Only use of PHRASE in BIBLE

Colossians BRAGGED of Seeing VISIONS > Jesus Seen & MADE IT!

v. 16 whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him.

He Sustains All Things – They have ULTIMATE Meaning in X

From Excruciating Suffering of Cross / Exalted Sovereign over Creation

Everything is IN Him, FOR Him, and THROUGH Him

Jesus is LORD over ALL from Earth to Heaven, Every Space in Between

v. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

WORLD > Rapidly Moving Electric Particles > Zooming in SPACE

SCIENCE says Something Mysterious Holds it Together: Name JESUS

“What holds the universe together is not an idea or a virtue, but a person: the resurrected Christ. Without him, electrons would not continue to circle nuclei, gravity would cease to work, the planets would not stay in orbit”
Douglas Moo

Remarkable Accolades for Man Brutally Publicly Executed 30 yrs Earlier

Paul > If Jesus UPHOLD Universe > He'll take care of little church in C.

Was NEVER a Time in Early Church when Highest Worship Not Given Jesus

Declare 'Jesus is LORD' is FOUNDATION of DISCIPLESHIP

“If there is one maverick molecule in all the universe, then God is not sovereign. And if God is not sovereign, He is not God”
R. C. Sproul

That INCLUDES Cancer & Covid 19 – Jesus is LORD over ALL

UNIVERSE holds NO TERROR for those who TRUST in Christ

No Menehunes / Juju / spirits / witches / sorcerers to be FEARED >

Martin LUTHER wrote, “The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, One little Word shall fell him” A Mighty Fortress is our God

Back in LAST Century > “the sun never set on the British Empire”

Even HAWAII Flag has UNION JACK in Corner > Capt Cook HERE

Family visited BRITISH Museum / London > Riches from Whole World

Scholars POURING over Fragment – Parchment, Stone, Marble: KNOW!

School Kids Transfixed by Same Artifacts > Know Little about DETAILS

JESUS holds UNFATHOMABLE Mysteries & Welcomes simple children!

2. Lover of the Church: Salvation

v. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church.

Attention SHIFTS from the COSMOS to the CHURCH

HEAD of Body > We ALL Depend on Him > Life flows from Him

Unlike Some PROMISES of Modern Church > It's about YOU!

Paul starts at OTHER End > It's About Jesus > Meaning found in HIM

FIND and FOLLOW Him you will FIND Yourself!

v. 18 He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,

Jesus the Firstborn from the Dead > Entered New Realm of Resurrection

TOMB was WOMB OUT of Which RISEN CHRIST Arose!

His Resurr. GUARANTEES Ours > Faith is in Him, Will Follow Him

July 20, 1969, the American astronaut Neil Armstrong put his left foot on the lunar surface and famously declared, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

> 1st Man to ENTER New Realm of MOON

CHURCH is God's NEW Creation > Growing in ALL the WORLD

DIED and LIVES for His Elect > Chosen Race who Call on His NAME

"He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death... This is the beginning of the New Creation: a new chapter in cosmic history has been opened" C.S. Lewis

v. 18 that in everything he might be preeminent.

Only time word PREEMINENT used in Bible > JESUS Alone Exalted

MOTTO of College I grad from > Covenant College, Lookout Mt, TN

"In all things, X preeminent" – Academics, Athletics, All of Society/Life

"The essence of the Christian religion consists in this, that the creation of the Father, devastated by sin, is restored in the death of the Son of God, and re-created by the Holy Spirit into a kingdom of God" Herman Bavinck

v. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
 God COMES to Dwell with His PEOPLE > FULLNESS, All of HIM!
 There was NOTHING in the Godhead that is NOT in Christ – Fully
 FULL Compliment of DIVINE Attributes are FOUND in HIM
 One Mediator btwn Heaven / Earth > Man who is God > Christ Jesus

1. Lord of the Cosmos: Creation / 2. Lover of the Church: Salvation

3. Leader of the Community: Reconciliation

v. 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Scope of Reconciliation is UNIVERSAL > Whole CREATED Order

All Things will Share WONDERS of the PEACE with GOD

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” Romans 8.19

Nothing and Nobody is OUTSIDE the Scope of X’s Reconciliation

NOT Many Paths to GOD – ONLY One is Way, Truth, and LIFE

NOT saying Everyone WILL be Saved – But in X Everyone CAN BE

Nothing in UNIVERSE is Outside the Reconciling WORK of Jesus

Reconcile ALL Things > All Things made Wrong > In X made Right

v. 21 And you, who once were alienated

ALIENATION began in Garden > Parents HID from God wearing Fig Lvs

We feel AWKWARD, ESTRANGED, SHAME, SEPARATED

We’re OUT of SYNC w ENVIRONMENT and with OURSELVES

v. 21 hostile in mind,

HOSTILE Minds – Screamed Crucify – Calling for MURDER of Christ

Sin is INTERNAL > Like Wood Rot cannot See > Weakens, Destroys

LURKS in Secret Places of Soul > SPREADS like a CONTAGION

We’ve given AID to this TRAITOR > become TRAITOROUS Ourselves

v. 21 doing evil deeds,

SIN not Black Problem, White, Brown, Asian, Hawaiian > HUMAN

SAME Sin-tainted BLOOD of ADAM runs thru ALL Our VEINS

v. 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death

Message of Cross NOT Appeal > ANNOUNCEMENT God DONE IT!

RECONCILE > Turn ENEMIES into FRIENDS!

God comes to DEAD in SIN > Rebels on the Run > Alienated Sinners

“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” Romans 5.11

Reconciliation is WORK of God > We’re NOT Searching for God!

Reconciliation is FINISHED Work > NOW – Peace is MADE in X

Not waiting for Human Achievement > but Human ACCEPTANCE

PEACE More than Cease-Fire > RESTORATION – Cosmic & Relational

From DARKNESS of our SINFUL Hearts > God offers DELIVERANCE

v. 22 in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him

‘present you’ LEGAL Descpt: GUILTLESS before God the JUDGE

Fatherly words of Old Man, Apostle John: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” 1 John 2.1,2

v. 22 you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

PURPOSE of Reconciliation is SANCTIFICATION – Holy, Blameless

REDEEMED by Christ > Holy, Blameless, Above Reproach

PLACE this Great Change Happened ON CROSS > Not in our HEARTS

NOT without Sin – Take it Seriously – Repent in Jesus NAME

v. 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

IF – Not Questioning IF God is going to Do It - ?? Will YOU Continue?
 Not Saved BY Continuing IN Faith, If Continue in Faith You are SAVED
 CONTINUANCE in Faith Necessary, True Saints WILL Persevere to End

GOSPEL working Around WORLD & Colossae > Preached by PAUL
 HOLD On – Don't DILUTE – DENY – DISTORT or DISHONOR It
 SECURELY Established in Gospel > HOPE for the FUTURE & NOW

“the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain”
 1 Corinthians 15.1,2

Paul emphasizes NEW Birth, Conversion, Justification > You have ALL
 NOT Need 2nd Experience – Extra Blessing – Another EXPERIENCE
 Continue Steadfast, Not Shifting, Holding ON to the GOSPEL Heard
 Not Running Around looking for NEW Anointing – FULLNESS in X

“The greatness of the salvation that is promised in the gospel cannot be separated from the greatness of the Savior that gospel proclaims. Any attempt in the first century world of Paul's day or the twenty-first century of our world to add or subtract from the Christ who is that Savior is a message that cannot save.”
 Mark G. Johnston

Message of Church > Christ & Him Crucified > Word of POWER
 Tempted to Shift POWER to OUR OWN Ministry > Work of JESUS
 Power NOT in Leaders or Ceremonies > SPIRIT and the SCRIPTURES
 Thru Out History PEOPLE looking for Axis Mundi / Center of World
 Greeks believed their gods lived on Mt. Olympus
 Egyptians had their Pyramids / Mesopotamians had Ziggurats
 Stood on Flat Rock middle of Temple of Heaven / BJ – Center of Earth
 Some look to EIFEL Tower – others the WASHINGTON Monument

True Center of World NOT where Man REACHES UP to God

Paul says Heaven & Earth have MET at the CROSS of Jesus

But God COMES DOWN – Live, Love, Suffer, Die, Rise from Death

ALIENATION is OVERCOME / RECONCILIATION is ESTABLISHED

God was IN CHRIST – Reconciling THE WORLD to Himself!

Colossians 1.¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.