

Part 3 in the series ***Set Your Minds***... a study of Colossians
Colossians 1:15-23
September 30, 2012

Introduction: What does the NFL refs and Jesus have in common? Nothing. Jesus is irreplaceable. Proposition: Jesus Christ is All Sufficient! He deserves to be first place in our lives! Why? Jesus is all sufficient in...

- I. Jesus is all sufficient in His **Credentials/Character** (v. 15)
 - A. His Portrait: *Image of the Invisible God* (v.15a)
 1. Some feel that this may have been an early Christian hymn.
 2. There are two words for image or likeness. One is an accidental likeness; the other is the word here: **Eikon** exact reproduction. Like a digital photo. Jesus is a clear picture of the Father. It implies a prototype; an example is a head on a coin.
 3. Christ makes God visible to the world.
 - B. His Position: *First Born of All Creation* (v.15b)
 1. Jehovah's Witnesses would take it to mean that Christ is part of creation. He is not part of creation, He is OVER all creation. It refers to His rank! He is preeminent! *"I will make him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth." Psalm 89:27*
 2. He is the firstborn as in heir, owner or possessor of creation. **"The primeval creator of all created things"**. Carl Henry
 3. That is, the specially honored, first and only Son over all creation. It is the use of a superlative like big, bigger, and biggest. Jesus is the Biggest!

4. If Paul were trying to say that Christ was part of creation, he would not have supported it by saying that Christ created all things.
5. Our Lord Jesus is not only our Savior but our Maker. You were created by Christ. *"Without him was not anything made that was made" (1 John 1:3).*
6. We see that He is a priority resulting in His sovereignty. He is the boss!

II. All Sufficient In **Creation** (v.16-17)

A. He is the creator of the universe (v.16)

¹⁶For 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.

1. **By** Him: some translations use “in Him”. By him gives us the sphere and “all things” gives us the extent. He uses 3 comparisons to illustrate it:
 - “Heaven and earth; visible and invisible...the **spiritual** realm
 - Thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities ...the **physical** realm
2. **Through** Him: He is the agent or means. He made the world. **The Father wills it, the Son plans it, and the HS executed it.**
3. **For** Him: He is the goal, reason and purpose of creation. It is all for Him! To ultimately bring Him glory!
4. What things do you find purpose and meaning in life in? **Illustration: Every answer begins with an F.**

B. He is the cohesion of the universe (v.17)

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

1. **Before:** refers to God’s preexistence before creation. He is sovereign over it not subject to it!

2. **Hold together:** literally He is the glue that holds the universe together. It references His preservation of the universe.
3. **Application:** He is the one to hold on to when your life is falling apart. If he can hold the universe together, can He handle your problems?

III. All Sufficient in the **Church** (v.18-19)

A. He is the **head** of the church (v.18a)

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

1. He is the ruling or governing authority; the seed of life. It wasn't some angelic manifestation.
2. **Illustration:** you can't live without a head. Running around like a chicken with its head cut off.
3. **Note:** when the head is knocked around (football concussion) we are not fully aware of what is going on and often make bad decisions. When our Head (Jesus Christ) is disrespected or knocked around, we groggily make bad decisions.

B. He is the **hope** of the church (v.18c-19)

1. In predestination: *He is the beginning,*
 - He is the Alpha and Omega (Rev. 22:13)
 - He is the First cause; brute fact.
 - **Illustration:** Arguing with an atheist
2. In power: *the firstborn from the dead,*
 - Not the first to be resurrected from the dead, but the first to be resurrected to a glorified body.
 - **In essence, everyone else was resuscitated not resurrected.**
 - ✓ **Widow of Zarephath's son** (I Kings 17:17-24) raised by Elijah;

- ✓ **Shunamite's son** (II Kings 4:20-37) raised by Elisha;
 - ✓ Man tossed into Elisha's tomb (II Kings 13:21) raised by God's Spirit;
 - ✓ **Widow of Nain's son** (Lk 7:11-16) raised by Jesus;
 - ✓ Synagogue ruler **Jairus' 12-year-old daughter** (Mk 5:35-43) raised by Jesus;
 - ✓ **Lazarus** (John 11:1-44) raised by Jesus;
 - ✓ **Tabitha also known as Dorcas** (Acts 9:36-41) raised by Peter;
 - ✓ **Eutychus** (Acts 20:7-12) raised by Paul;
 - ✓ **Men raised upon Jesus' death** (Mt 27:51-53) raised by God
- Enoch never died (Gen. 5:24)
 - This means he has the power to give us eternal life too (*“and the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” I John 5:11*)
3. In pre-eminence: *That in everything he might be preeminent.*
- It is first, with no close second.
 - **Pix: It is Michael Phelps in Olympic swimming**
 - It is your favorite sports team...no matter what!
4. In position: ¹⁹*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,*
- Jesus has it all. He has everything we need.
 - **All:** not partial
 - **Fullness (pleroma):** means totality or abundance. Jesus represents all that God is. It was a technical term that the Gnostics use to refer to a series of emanations, the chain of angelic beings, which mediated between God and man. Paul refutes

that and says this “plentitude” dwells in Christ permanently.

- **Pleased:** This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

IV. All-Sufficient in **Conversion** (v.20-23)

A. In His **reconciliation** (v.20-22a)

*²⁰and through him to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. ²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,*

1. Refers to our redemption which requires Christ’s blood on the cross;
2. He took our sin onto His body. He absorbs the contagion. He took it on! Notice how he connects this with His deity. He couldn’t do it without being God! If Jesus is not God, we don’t have a savior.
3. **Blood of the Cross:** His death refutes the “swoon” theory.
4. **Alienated and hostile:** Like some of you are with you ex wife or your parents.
5. **Reconcile all things:** this is sometimes used as a proof text for universalism. It means to remove the impediments to peace so that harmony prevails. In this context it is saying that one-day Jesus will prevail over evil in every realm. He wins. The ultimate peacemaker! Whether you trust Him now on earth, we will all bow ultimately to Him in heaven (**Phil. 2:10-11...every knee shall bow**).

B. In our **restoration** (v.22b-23)

1. The reason
in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

- He wants to present us in a certain way or condition. How?
 - * **Holy**: separated from evil; worthy of respect
 - * **Blameless**: without blemish; fault; lamb in OT.
 - * **Above Reproach**: No one can bring an accusation. (**Who will bring a charge against God's elect? Rom. 8:33**). The implication is that no one can
 - Who does he present us to? God the Father himself!
2. The requirement:
- 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.*
- Our continuance in the faith proves that we are reconciled. **Continue**: not a reference to the loss of salvation but rather the exhortation to remain faithful. It is a first class condition. It assumes they will remain true. (We assume that it is true and it is!). Our stability is an evidence of our salvation.
 - **Shifting from the hope of the gospel, would be tantamount to denying the gospel.** The present tense indicates that it will not be shifting.
 - They heard it, but Paul now records it!

V. Summary: Our Response to God

A. Christ is...

1. The Image of God: so let's **reflect** Him!
2. Before all things: so let's **respect** Him!
3. Holding all things: so let's **trust** Him
4. Head of all things: so let's **honor** Him!

5. The Beginning of all things: so let's **follow** Him!

6. Reconciling all things: so let's **thank** Him!

B. My life is...

- My own... I don't need God!
- In turmoil...I need God!
- Without God...I want to trust Him with my life!
- Boring ...I need a challenge!
- God Centered...I have a purpose!

Table Talk

1. What things do we tend to put "before" Christ in our lives? Why?

2. What are the things we find purpose and meaning in life in?

3. How would you refute from the Bible that Jesus is just one of "many gods"?

4. When Jesus Christ has His rightful place in your life, what does that look like?

5. Is there anything keeping you from being completely sold out (all in!) to Him? What changes will you need to make in your life this week?