

“The Glory of the Son” Colossians 1:13-20, Sermon Notes
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Saving Grace Bible Church
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“For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.¹⁵ And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.¹⁹ For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him,²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” (Colossians 1:13-20 NAS)

This is the time of year that publishers start to figure out who should grace the cover of their magazine as the person of the year

- They have man of the year awards
- Teacher of the year
- Woman of the year
- GQ faced controversy over their selection this year by picking a quarterback who no longer plays football versus a linebacker who does play, and raised 30 million for hurricane victims in Houston
- News Story of the Year
- Time Magazine, People Magazine and others pick the person they believe had the greatest influence this year in a particular field
- You can't miss them, they are all over the newsstands in the supermarket
- This whole trend stuck out to me this year because Time was supposed to have named Trump the Person of the Year and he says he would not accept it because he was too busy

In order to qualify for one of these awards you must have a superior resume

- A resume that would make you stand out from the crowd
- Accomplished something great or notorious
- Impacted many people
- Helped in a great way
- Changed our lives in some significant way
- Or been a crucial part of our lives
- Like the athlete who takes over a game, puts his team on his shoulders, and wills the team to victory
- Like the business man who analyzes the market, sees a need, corners a market and makes a run on it before anyone else catches on, securing the business for years to come

The more I think about these qualities, the more I see there is one name that rises to the top year after year

- There is one Man who is more influential than any Man who lives today
- There is one Man who has helped more people than anyone else
- There is one Man who models gentleness, patience, and kindness like no other
- There is one Man who cared for humanitarian needs and spiritual needs like no other
- There is one Man who has helped more people after his life than during His life
- This Man is as relevant today after His death than when He was alive

This Man of course could be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ

He has the most superior resume and is aptly fit to be the man of the year, every year

- We have not one but two holidays every year remembering Him. We celebrate both His birth and His death
 - These two holidays have the greatest economic impact on our nation
- Jesus is the obvious choice for man of the year every year for even today thousands of years after his death he is still impacting people
- Someone should tell these folks receiving the Man of the Year award, the award is like receiving a second-place trophy. You may be happy you got recognized but you are still in second place. Or as some like to say, "First, loser"

This sermon series then is an extended resume to demonstrate the superior virtue, character, and credentials of the Lord Jesus Christ

For indeed there is one name worthy to be praised. There is only one name when mentioned knees will bow. There is one who is Lord and sovereign over all. While it may not look like it yet, the resume we will demonstrate in this series will demonstrate the truth of these claims

I often wonder if we do not suffer from indifference because we stand the glory of Christ so frequently

If our tongues can become desensitized to different flavors when we are exposed to them over time

- If our eyes can get used to vivid colors and images
- If our nose can become odor blind
- Then we should not be surprised that one of the faults in our spiritual lives is to become spiritually dull

We become used to seeing the glory of Christ that we fail to marvel and be amazed. The truth which should comfort us in the midst of a storm, arrest us in the days of ease, sober us in the days of plenty, and humble us in days of success is forgotten or ignored

- When we come to Christmas we are lulled into the hysteria of Christmas dinners, Christmas shopping, Christmas Bonuses, Christmas Stories that we lose sight of the reason for the season, Jesus Christ

For this reason, it is appropriate around the holiday season to fix our eyes on the glory of Christ

- I am going to start from the grand and glorious and move to the subtle and less obvious in this series. We will move from the glory of Christ to the humility of Christ. My hope is for you to understand the Glory of Christ so that you will marvel at the baby in the manger.

How does one leave the throne room of God, surrounded by the worship, adoration, protection, and service of the angels to be born into this world in humble circumstances?

- To save a people who are fickle
- To rescue people who are prone to wander

Now as we get into this series, and in particular talk about the glory of Jesus Christ, we walk on sacred ground

"I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images." (Isaiah 42:8 NAS)

- God is jealous for His name and His glory

"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me," (Exodus 20:5 NAS)

"for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14 NAS)

You remember the difference between jealousy and envy right?

- To be envious is to desire something that is not yours
- To be jealous is to desire something that belongs to you

The Old Testament describes God as jealous

- What belongs to Him He will keep
- What is His will remain His for He is a jealous God
- This jealousy is both fear producing and comforting
- It produces fear as we ought to guard against giving what belongs to God to another lest His jealousy flare
- It is comforting as we know that we belong to God and he will protect us

So when we come to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, as being Eternal God, we tread on sacred ground

- If Jesus is a liar, we are condemned
- If Jesus is a lunatic, we are without hope
- If Jesus is Lord, we stand guarded by the God of Glory

Let us set the resume straight for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is after all deserving to be the man of the year for all eternity

- He is the first and has no rivals

The reason why we are looking at the resume of Christ is to remember the greatness of Christ this time of year

- This is the most important work for us to fix our eyes on Christ
- This is what will unify us as God's people
- This is what protects us from error and heresy
 - People are prone to look at themselves and their wants. The remedy is to fix our eyes on Christ
- I want our souls to be enriched with a higher view of Christ
- The Church suffers when it has a low view of Christ
- When we think Christ does not know how to reach people the Church suffers
- When we think that Christ does not love us the Church suffers
- When we think that Christ is indifferent or does not care the Church suffers
- When we think that Christ is just like us the Church suffers

To see and honor Christ for who He is and what He has done protects the Church and unifies the Church under the matchless name of Christ

Here in the text before us: Col 1:15-20 Paul gives us Nine descriptions of Christ, which set him apart from everyone else. These qualities make Christ preeminent over all creation. They are the proof that His name is above all names

“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.” (Ephesians 1:21 NAS)

God has given Jesus Christ the superior resume which sets Him apart

- 1) He is God 1:15a
- 2) He is Preeminent 15b (He is first)
- 3) He is Creator 16
- 4) He is Preexistent 17a (He is Eternal)
- 5) He is Sustainer 17b
- 6) He is the Head of the Church 18a
- 7) He is the first from the dead 18b
- 8) He is Powerful 19
- 9) He is Mediator 20

1. He is God

Image of the invisible God- Deity of Christ vs 15

- Image or likeness
- We get the word Icon from the Greek word here
- Speaks of an image on a coin being in likeness
- To see the image on the coin is to see the exact likeness of the real person

Here Jesus is described as the exact likeness of God

- To see Jesus is to see God

It is interesting that while we are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:26-27) when we are born again we are made into the image of Jesus Christ

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;” (Romans 8:29 NAS)

- As we are made into the image of Christ we are then made to conform to the image of God

#He did not become the image of God at the incarnation. He has eternally existed as the image of God, the exact reflection of God

- The Greek verb here indicates he is presently and continues to be. He did not become, he is

Paul here simply states what Jesus Christ is, the exact representation of God

- Some have tried to teach that Jesus never claimed to be God and neither did His disciples.
- Those teachers ignore the plain teaching of scripture

Sine He is the image of God, the exact likeness of God, and can make such claims and live, for God does not share His glory with another, He is God. The rest of these attributes affirm this. Here Paul plainly states it

“And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.” (Colossians 1:15 NAS)*First Born Over all Creation* –

There are two ways people misunderstand this passage

- 1) Firstborn = First created
- 2) Firstborn = Subordination of nature

These come to this idea and say see Jesus was born which means he was created. He did not exist but now he did exist. Or they say because he was born he has to have a nature which is subordinate, and therefore not equal to God’s nature

Neither of these ideas are correct

- What you must see is the subordinate or modifying clause to the term first born “of all creation.”

If Paul Simply said Jesus was firstborn. Then we could start to argue what that could mean

- It could mean something about His existence
- It could be saying something about how He entered into this world
- It could say something about His relationship to the Father

But since the word translated “Firstborn” is modified by the phrase “of all creation” Paul is speaking about Christ’s relationship to creation

- He does the same thing later when he says Christ is the “firstborn” from the dead

This phrase is speaking of priority

1) It is actually a significant Jewish concept emphasizing the priority of the first born. In the OT the First-Born carried the rights to the family inheritance

- Think about it like this, Should the queen of England die and should prince Charles die, which one of her grandsons would take over as King? William or Harry? William of course because he is the firstborn
- The idea of first Born here is not the idea of origin but of priority
- The first born had the right to take over his father's inheritance

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 "If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and *both* the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the first-born son belongs to the unloved, ¹⁶ then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the first-born before the son of the unloved, who is the first-born. ¹⁷ "But he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the first-born."

Also take a look at Joseph when he looks at his brothers who sat down to eat with him in Gen 43:33

"Now they were seated before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment." (Genesis 43:33 NAS)

The term firstborn emphasizes rights or position rather than chronology when entering the world

2) The word emphasizes superiority and priority
Heb 1:6

"And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'" (Hebrews 1:6 NAS)

The term is used as a title and is not to be used as the idea of birth or origin

Here it is clear that Paul is teaching that Jesus is first among the whole creation

- Since He is the perfect image of God this would be natural

We dare not rival Christ for we know plainly that have no right to claim to be first when He is in consideration

- A proud man has no knowledge of Christ. If he did he would lower himself quickly

3. Jesus is Creator

"For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16 NAS)

Jesus as Creator vs 16

Ps 100:3 PS 95:5-7 Neh 9:6

“Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; *We are* His people and the sheep of His pasture.” (Psalm 100:3 NAS)

“The sea is His, for it was He who made it; And His hands formed the dry land.⁶ Come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.⁷ For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice.” (Psalm 95:5-7 NAS)

Jer 10:16; 51:19; Gen 2:7; Ps 102:25; Is 37:16; Is 40:12; Is 40:25-26a; Is 42:5; Is 44:24; Is 40:22, 42:5; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:13

“Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it.” (Isaiah 42:5 NAS)

“I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,” (Isaiah 42:6 NAS)

The implication is this, if God is the creator then why not trust Him?

- Here Paul says Jesus is the creator
- But the passage goes deeper to explain that as creator he is over all things, visible and invisible
- Everything was created BY Jesus FOR Jesus
- He is the source and the reason

We have to come to believe that this Jesus is who the NT says he is. He is the creator of this world.

- He does the works of God
- Jesus is Preexistent Vs 17a

He is before all things

- If Jesus is the creator of all things, it is necessary that He existed before everything was created
- To say that Jesus is the creator of all things is to say, “I believe that Jesus is God, who preexisted before all things, and out of nothing created all that we see and do not see.”

Where firstborn refers to priority this phrase “before all things” speaks of chronology. Christ is first Chronologically. Nothing existed before Christ. He was Preexistent

- His position is first
- His origin is first

“Christ has always existed as the Son of God but became a child only at the moment of his miraculous conception.” JFM Systematic theology

- He existed eternally as the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity. Equal to God. In no way inferior or superior to any member of the Trinity
- Christ did not come into existence at the incarnation. Christ became a child at the incarnation

- At our conception we come into existence but for Christ conception meant his entrance into this world not his entrance into existence
- For he existed before any of this existed

Jesus is not a mere man. He is the God-Man. Flawless God and perfect man. He existed before all things, he created all things for Himself, and he stands and first among all things

“We find a more direct testimony for His preexistence contained in a number of passages, where Christ is said to have been “sent” to have “come from heaven,” to “come into the world,” to be “made flesh,” etc, and so on. (John 3:31; 6:38; 16:28; 13:3; 6:62; John 1:14; Heb. 2:7, 9, 14, 16).”

He is God

He is Preeminent (First)

He is Creator

He is Preexistent

4. *Jesus as Sustainer Vs 17b*

“And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:17 NAS)

It is not enough to say that Jesus created everything. We must go forward and say that He holds it all together

- The dooms day people run around saying the world is ending. Sure, when Christ is dead
- The world is ending, sure when Christ is overthrown

Christ is the sustainer who holds the world together

Acts 17:25, 28

“neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;” (Acts 17:25 NAS)

“for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'” (Acts 17:28 NAS)

Ps 104:24-30

“O LORD, how many are Thy works! In wisdom Thou hast made them all; The earth is full of Thy possessions.²⁵ There is the sea, great and broad, In which are swarms without number, Animals both small and great.²⁶ There the ships move along, *And* Leviathan, which Thou hast formed to sport in it.²⁷ They all wait for Thee, To give them their food in due season.²⁸ Thou dost give to them, they gather *it* up; Thou dost open Thy hand, they are satisfied with good.²⁹ Thou dost hide Thy face, they are dismayed; Thou dost take away their spirit, they expire, And return to their dust.³⁰ Thou dost send forth Thy Spirit, they are created; And Thou dost renew the face of the ground.” (Psalm 104:24-30 NAS)

The idea of sustainer is not only does Christ keep us alive He provides what we need to be cared for

- All the elements needed to have life and keep life are preserved by Christ
- He sustains the sun, the oxygen, the water
- He keeps this world held together
- He controls even the extent of evil

- He preserves everything needed to survive

He is God
 He is Preeminent (First)
 He is Creator
 He is Preexistent
 He is Sustainer

5. He is the Head of the Church

“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” (Colossians 1:18 NAS)

- The one who stands over all creation also resides as Head over the Church
- The creator of all things is intimately associated with the Church
- Yes you may know there is a creator, we have that creator as our head

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,²³ which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.”* (Ephesians 1:18-23 NAS)

- The power of God raised Christ from the dead
- Seated Christ on the throne
- Brought his enemies below Him
- And then gave him to rule over the Church

The conquering hero is the head of the Church

6. He is the first from the dead

“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” (Colossians 1:18 NAS)

The term *protokos* is used in verse 18 to point to the priority of Christ in the resurrection

- Clearly Jesus was not the first resurrected
 - Elijah in 1 Kings 17 raises the widow’s son
 - Jesus followed in the same steps as Elijah and raised a widow’s dead son in Luke 7
 - also Lazarus which you will remember when Jesus called Lazarus forth
 - So clearly Paul is not intending to emphasize chronology here but Priority
 - Jesus was not the first resurrection but His was the most important resurrection for His resurrection secured our Salvation. Read 1 Cor 15

This is why Paul says he was resurrected so that He would have first place in everything

- There is no one who remotely compares to the Lord Jesus Christ

7. He is powerful

“For it was the *Father’s* good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him.” (Colossians 1:19 NAS)

For the fullness to dwell in Christ means that all the power and attributes of God dwell in the Lord Jesus Christ

- The incarnation reveals the will of the Father and the obedience of the Son
- This verse is an indication of this
- Jesus says I was sent – which emphasizes the father’s will
- Here Paul says it was the Father’s pleasure for the fullness of God to dwell in Christ

It is basically another way of saying God was pleased to have His fullness in Christ for God

God likes to hide in plain site

Ps 19:1-2

“For the choir director. A Psalm of David . The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1-2 NAS)

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:18-20 NAS)

God is regularly making Himself known

Here Paul says that all the fullness is dwelling in Christ

- Get this, the fullness of God was hiding in plain sight before those who walked with Christ
- To see Christ was to see the fullness of God, the exact image of God

I cannot even begin to imagine that day when those who walked this earth with Christ appear before Him in the day of Judgment.

- Mockers who ridiculed him
- The indifferent multitudes
- The fickle mobs
- The carnal crowds

All will finally see him for who He really is, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He is God

He is Preeminent (First)

He is Creator

He is Preexistent

He is Sustainer

He is Head of the Church
He is First from the Dead
He is Powerful

But really I pray all would see Him as we see Him in this final attribute:

8. He is mediator

“and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” (Colossians 1:20 NAS)

He is the savior of the World

- Through Him all things are reconciled to God
- There is no other source of salvation
- No other way to appease the wrath of God
- No other way to assuage the demands of the law
- No other way to stand in the presence of the Holy one
- No other way to enter into the Kingdom
- No other name by which we can be saved, but at the name of Jesus

As God He can satisfy the demands of God

- He is not a prophet like Mahammad
- He is not an icon or image like buddha
- He is not myth like Zeus
- Nor is he fraud like Jim Jones

He is the one who saves mankind from their sins

- Still today He rescues through us as we preach the gospel and through His spirit as the Spirit regenerates
- Still today He gives peace as we walk in His ways
- Still today His message is heard, taught, and explained
- His words are as meaningful and useful to us today than when we first heard them.
- His ways give our lives meaning and purpose
- His standards protect us from lawlessness and sin
- His example encourages us to press on
- His integrity keeps us striving

He rules firmly but He is Gentle to His people

- His words crush wickedness and cause the righteous to rejoice
- His ways strain the ungodly but give us to the godly
- His worship bores the godless but rejoices our hearts

There is one and one only who reigns supremely over all and is worthy to be named man of the year, every year, and that is Jesus Christ

Conclusion

Consider this:

- 1) He is God 1:15a – So He must be honored
- 2) He is Preeminent 15b (He is first) – so He must come first
- 3) He is Creator 16 – so He can be trusted and relied upon to know us and our needs
- 4) He is Preexistent 17a (He is Eternal) – So he must be Revered
- 5) He is Sustainer 17b – So he is trust worthy
- 6) He is the Head of the Church 18a – So He rules over us
- 7) He is the first from the dead 18b – So He gives us hope of eternal life
- 8) He is Powerful 19 – So we dare not resist Him
- 9) He is Mediator 20 – So we believe upon Him for eternal life

There is no one like the Lord Jesus Christ

When we come to Christmas and we want to look into the manger and see the crying infant and marvel at the humility and dependency of Christ. Let us not stop there. Let us see the greatness of this child who has no rivals. Let us see the wonders of this Savior who give us life. Let us see the grand glory of the God-Man, so our faith is properly anchored

“One day the shadows will flee away. The days of preparation will all come to an end. The final day will dawn. Already we acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. But then we will know him as we have never before – in face-to-face fellowship. Then we will be made like him, for we shall see him as he is.

We shall then see Jesus as the Seed of the Woman who crushed the Serpent’s head, as the Prophet of God whose word directs our lives, as the Great High Priest who intercedes for us, and as the King who subdues all our enemies and reigns over us forever. We will recognize him as the Son of Man seated besides the Ancient of Days, and as the Suffering Servant who is now exalted as the Lamb on the throne.

On that day we will see with unclouded vision why his Father has given him the Name above All Names.”

Name above All Names – Begg and Ferguson pg 180-81

There is only one resume to consider and that is the one which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ

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