

THAT IN ALL THINGS HE MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE

TEXT: COL. 1:12-19

Introduction:

1. Some times we hear Christians talk of how difficult it is to win souls today with all of the cults and false religions and so on.
2. But we need to remember that there were plenty of false cults and false religions around in the apostle Paul's day.
3. The apostolic church had to battle the Gnostics, a cult that erred on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are plenty of people around today with this same devilish way of thinking.
4. Paul's epistle to the Colossians was written to warn believers of this type of error. There are several fundamental doctrines set forth:
 - (1) the eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - (2) the physical reality of His incarnation
 - (3) His direct creation of the entire universe
 - (4) His death and resurrection
 - (5) Christ is the head of the church
5. I have entitled this message, "That in All Things He Might Have the Preeminence" (Col. 1:18b), and I would like to set forth seven reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ is preeminent:
 - (1) He is the Deliverer (vs. 13)
 - (2) He is the Redeemer (vs. 14)
 - (3) He is the Revealer (vs. 15)
 - (4) He is the Creator (vs. 16)
 - (5) He is the Sustainer (vs. 17)
 - (6) He is the Head of the Body (vs. 18)
 - (7) He is the Reconciler (vss. 20, 21).

I. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE DELIVERER (vs. 13)

1. Strictly speaking, verse 13 says God the Father has "delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."
2. He delivers from the power of sin as well as the penalty of sin.
3. We have been "called out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).
4. Acts 26:18 says, we have been "turned from darkness to light."

5. In Scripture we see this contrast between Christians who are "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (1:12) and sinners who stumble in darkness.
6. In Scripture, darkness represents sin and error and immorality and misery. John 3:19 says, "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."
7. We have been delivered not only from the penalty of sin, but also from the power of sin. Romans 13:12 says, "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."
8. This sin-loving world is getting deeper and deeper in darkness and only the Lord Jesus can deliver sinners "from the power of darkness" (Col. 1:13).
9. Colossians 1:13 refers to "the power of darkness," and our Lord referred to "the power of darkness" in Luke 22:53.
10. We are surrounded by powerful forces of darkness – occultism, homosexuality, pornography, drunkenness, drugs, "political correctness," anarchy and violence and looting, religious apostasy, Romanism, Islam, etc. Only the blood of Jesus can deliver sinners from such horrible darkness (1:13, 14).
11. Politicians cannot deliver our country from the forces of darkness. In fact, most of them are in darkness.
12. Only the Lord Jesus Christ – our Deliverer – can save sinners, justify them, regenerate them, cleanse them, and transform them into godly Christians.
13. God "hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (1:13). This means Christ's kingdom is already in existence here on earth. Presently it exists as a spiritual reality. When Christ returns, He will establish it physically.
14. Presently it is internal. When our Lord returns it will be external. Romans 14:17 says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."
15. "Hath delivered us" and "hath translated us" indicate something that has already been done. If you are saved then you have already been delivered from the darkness of sin, and you have already been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

II. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE REDEEMER (vs. 14)

1. The idea behind redemption is deliverance from the bondage of sin by means of payment. The payment was the shed blood of Christ.

2. The blood of Christ is omitted in Colossians 1:14 in most of the modern Bible translations. For example, the NIV and the ESV say, "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
3. "Through his blood" has been taken out.
4. Many concerned scholars have looked into this and are convinced that Gnostics tried to corrupt many of the early manuscripts of the Bible. That is why the blood of Christ is not in the critical Greek text of Colossians 1:14.
5. Colossians 1:14 teaches us that Christ is our Redeemer and "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (vs. 14). We should reject these new translations that take out the blood of Christ, His deity, etc.
6. Liberal denominations have taken the blood of Christ out of their hymnbooks. This is modern-day gnosticism. And they have taken the blood of Christ out of their Bibles and out of their preaching.
7. I heard about a pastor who was recently called to a church and a member asked him if he preached "too much" on the blood of Christ. He said one could never preach "too much" on the blood of Christ!
8. First Peter 1:18, 19 says we have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Not only is the blood of Christ precious, I Peter 1:18 also indicates it is incorruptible.
9. Redemption includes "the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).
10. Forgiveness involves restoration, which includes "saving, cleansing, justifying, purifying, sanctifying, illuminating, welcoming, blessing, and glorifying" (W.H. Griffith Thomas).

III. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE REVEALER (vs. 15)

1. The Bible plainly states that Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (vs. 15). In II Cor. 4:4, Christ is called "the image of God."
 - a. In Hebrews 1:3, Christ is called "the express image of His person."
 - b. We know that in John 4:24, Jesus said that God is a Spirit.
 - c. We also know Jesus said in John 14:9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."
 - d. John 1:18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

- e. Paul referred to Christ as “God manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16) – this verse is also changed in the modern translations.
 - f. The JWs and other cults have a real problem with this (cf. Col. 1:19; 2:9). As we go out door to door every Saturday morning, just about every week we see the JW’s out visiting. We need more Christians out knocking on doors because the devil’s crowd is working hard while Christians are slacking off.
 - g. Christ is also “the firstborn of every creature” (vs. 15b); not “first created” but “firstborn” which refers to His supremacy or preeminence (cf. Ex. 4:22).
2. Listen to this quote from Virginia Mollenkott, a lesbian who worked on the NIV translation: “Jesus was first born only in the sense that he was the first to show us that it is possible to live in oneness with the divine source while we are here on this planet.” How’s that for double-talk?! (She sounds more confused than a JW!) These are the kind of people working on some of the new Bible translations.
 3. Jesus is the “first born” in the sense that He is preeminent (Col. 1:18b). Jesus is “the firstborn of every creature” (1:15) because He is before all creation; He is the Head of all that has been created. “For by Him were all things created...” (1:16).
 4. “Firstborn” does not mean “first born” the way we normally refer to firstborn children, and it does not mean “first created.” Christ was not created – He is the creator (1:16).
 5. The JW’s insert the word “other” into Col. 1:16.
 6. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9; cf. 1:19).

IV. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE CREATOR (vs. 16)

1. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is our Creator. It is a shame that children are taught in government schools and universities that they have evolved from monkeys.
2. Christ’s position as our Creator is brought out here in verse 16. The context makes it clear that He is separate from and above creation.
3. The prepositions stress the relationship of Christ to creation: “by Him...by Him and for Him” (vs. 16).

4. “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made...He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not” (John 1:3, 10).
5. The Gnostics taught that an angel created another angel, who in turn created another angel, and so on.
6. “For by Him were all things created...” (Col. 1:16). The evolutionists teach that creation is a process of continuous change from a lower state to a higher, more complex state (they cannot explain who or what started this “change”). But in reality, things are actually going from better to worse – this universe is running down (cf. Romans 1).
7. Dr. Asa Gray, once called the greatest botanist in the history of American science, said, “A beginning is wholly beyond the ken and scope of science which is concerned with how things go on and has nothing to say as to how they begin.”
8. T. H. Huxley, who vigorously promoted Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution (he was called “Darwin’s bulldog”), said this shortly before he died, “It appears to me that the scientific investigator is wholly incompetent to say anything at all about the first origin of the material universe.”
9. It actually takes more faith to believe the foolishness of evolution than it does to believe the Bible! Most sinners would rather believe anything rather than repent and get right with God.
10. Evolution is a direct attack on God and the Bible. Richard Dawkins is an outspoken evolutionist. He wrote a book entitled, *The God Delusion*.
11. Dawkins contends that a supernatural Creator almost certainly does not exist and that religious faith is a delusion. He is the one who is deluded.
12. Dawkins said, "Charles Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."
13. Nearly 100 years ago, the scientific community was all excited when a fossil digger named Charles Dawson discovered an old jawbone. They said this jawbone came from “the Piltdown man.” Then they said he was the “missing link.”
14. Eventually they discovered it was all a hoax! Dawson had painted the jawbone with wood stain and red oil paint, and today the Piltdown man is considered the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the scientific community.

15. If the Piltdown man was the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the scientific community, then evolution itself is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated by the scientific community.
16. I heard about a preacher who preached a message against evolution and someone came up after the meeting to give him a hard time. The man insisted evolution was true and that we were descended from monkeys. The preacher said, “Hey, I’m not going to argue. You know your kinfolk better than I do.”

V. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE SUSTAINER (vs. 17)

1. “He is before all things” (vs. 17).
2. The Gospel of John begins by declaring that Christ is eternal, He is before all things (John 1:1).
3. Then, we have the testimony of John the Baptist: “He was before me” (John 1:30), though John was older, humanly speaking.
4. In John 8:58, Jesus said to the Jews, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”
5. And of course, there are many other Scriptures which affirm His pre-existence and eternality (e.g., Micah 5:2, where it says, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” — this is another verse mangled by the NIV and the other new translations).
6. He is before all things, “and by Him all things consist” (vs. 17b). “Consist” means to hold together – isn’t that comforting! We are living in perilous times, but I’m not worried about ISIS or Ebola or Armageddon. (If I was not saved I probably would be).
7. Christ is the “preserver” or the “sustainer” of creation. Hebrews 1:3 says that He is “upholding all things by the word of His power.”
8. Harry Ironside used to say, “What makes gravitation gravitate? Christ!”

VI. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY (vs. 18)

1. As the Head, Christ directs the body. He is our only Head – as Baptists we must reject all manifestations of popery. Romanism is gaining great strength in these days of apostasy. It seems that there are very few preachers willing to take a strong stand against popery.

2. It wasn't always like this. A.J. Gordon said the true pope was the devil himself and the real cardinals were his demons. Spurgeon called the pope the vicar of antichrist.
3. But today, we have Baptist preachers saying how wonderful the pope is! Who has changed? Rome hasn't!
4. The news media finally exposed the homosexual priest cover-up. The RCC in America has spent over two and a half billion dollars to settle out of court.
5. The scandal was not limited to the USA but it spread around the world. But we are definitely not seeing a mass exodus out of Romanism.
6. The church is a spiritual organism, not an ecclesiastical/political organization.

VII. CHRIST IS PREEMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE RECONCILER (vss. 20, 21).

1. There are many people today demonstrating for "peace." Of course we know there will be no peace until the Prince of Peace returns.
2. Before we were saved we were "alienated" from God (Col. 1:21). We were the "enemies" of God (1:21).
3. Our minds were confused and antagonistic to the things of God (1:21). We were "wicked" sinners, who deserved to go to hell (1:21).
4. We were God's "enemies" (1:21), but Jesus "made peace through the blood of His cross" (1:20), and now we have been reconciled.
5. True peace only comes through faith in Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. "Enemies" is a strong word (Col. 1:21). We see the same teaching in Romans 5:10, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son..."
2. We were God's enemies – but thank God, our Redeemer, our Deliverer, our Reconciler went to the cross and died for our sins.
3. These are perilous times, and this is the message sinners desperately need to hear.