

Theme: If we are to stand fast in the face of the world's onslaught against our faith we must know him in whom we stand. Apart from this knowledge there is no true understanding of this world or the next. In that knowledge we find true meaning and purpose.

Background: Paul has given thanks to God for what the Colossians have. He has asked the Lord to provide all they need. He now exalts the One in whom rests all their hope.

Introduction: The detail in this "poem" is amazing. But don't miss the bigger picture.

Question: Is this a true early hymn of the church or is it the exalted & poetic prose of the apostle? We can't know for certain, but it doesn't change what we find in it.

## I. Lord of Creation

### A. Who He is (15, 17)

#### 1. "The image of the invisible God"

- a. Not a "novel" idea in scripture
  - Ezekiel 1:25; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Hebrews 1:3
- b. How can the invisible have an image?
  - It shares in the reality of what is represented
- c. God is revealed - John 1:18; 14:9

NOTE: We too are image bearers. (Gen 1:26, 27; 1 Cor.11:7; Colossians 3:10)

#### 2. "The firstborn of all creation"(or "before all creation")

- It denotes status (Psalm 89:27; Ex.4:22; Isa.64:8)
- Christ is distinguished from all created things.

NOTE: Jesus Christ is 1<sup>st</sup> over the creation – not 1<sup>st</sup> within creation.

-He is...before all things!

-He is "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2)

#### 3. The One who controls creation (17)

- a. Establishing His preeminence (John 1:3)
- b. He actively sustains the creation - He keeps it from falling apart.

NOTE: The universe is not self-sufficient. (Deistic view!)

### B. How We Know (16)

#### 1. The agent of creation

- a. "in him" - en
  - Having its existence "in him" (Ephesians 1:4)
- b. "by him" or "through Him" – dia
  - The agent - bringing everything into existence

#### 2. "For him" - The end/purpose of creation

- For His glory and praise
- For self-revelation
- To unite all things "in him" (Ephesians 1:10)

NOTE: Creation is established and sustained in the Lord of Creation.

Salvation is anchored in the Lord of the Church, his Re-Creation.

## II. Lord of the Re-Creation

### A. Who He is (18)

#### 1. He is "the head of the church"

NOTE: The church is more about Christ than it is about us

- It is about our head, and our "grow[ing] up into our head, Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 4:15)

#### 2. The beginning - firstborn from the dead

- In his resurrection
- He is the first - of many (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)
- 3. "The preeminent one" in everything!
  - Isn't he already? Yes, and...No
  - It is his right, but has not yet fully exercised it
  - He becomes LORD through his sacrifice and death, defeating sin
- B. How we know (19, 20)
  1. "In Him" Fullness of God in him
    - Greater than the angels, temples, or the creation
    - All the attributes of God are revealed in Him
  2. "By/through" him
    - a. Reconciling all things to himself
      - The whole world needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 8:19ff)
      - His reign is personal (Romans 5:1)
    - b. Making peace!
      - By the blood of His cross!
      - Philippians 2:10, 11

### III. Lord of Life

- A. His work in them (and us)
  1. Who you were (21)
    - Enemy of God, enemy of Christ, enemies of one another
    - Without God, without hope, far from his promises
  2. Who we are (22a)
    - He has brought the end of alienation
    - It required a real, physical death!
  3. What awaits us (22b)
    - Holy, blameless, above reproach
- B. Our work in Him (23)
  1. Faith - We cannot let go of the truth! (Galatians 1:6)
  2. Hope - Universally proclaimed, to anyone and everyone

### IV. To What Purpose?

One aspect of application: Know that your life has meaning and purpose. You are part of a glorious plan that was established before the foundations of the earth. Your life rests in the one created all things - with purpose and holy desire that we might share in his joy and fellowship. His is at work, in and through the church to bring that re-creation to its fullness. And in the process is bringing us to that fullness as well.

Therefore, we do not lose heart or despair as the world does around us. Instead, we live to make Him known in all the world, bearing fruit for the Kingdom of Christ and for eternal life.

This is the Lord upon whom our eyes must be fixed.