

Colossians 1:15-19
The Preeminence of Christ

1

Introduction

Colossians was written to counter the false teaching that had entered the area. These heresies are still around today. They center in the person and work of Jesus and how salvation is obtained.

This passage defends the true nature of Jesus' identity by viewing Him in relation to four things: God, the universe, the unseen world, and the church.

2

Colossians 1:15-19

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

3

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Paul gives three reasons for Jesus' preeminence over creation. **First, He is the Creator.** The false teachers at Colossae taught that spirit was good and matter evil. Therefore, a good God could not create an evil universe. However, Scripture is clear that Jesus created all things.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

4

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

By studying the creation, one can **gain a glimpse of the power, knowledge, and wisdom of the Creator**. The sheer size of the universe is staggering. The sun, for example, has a diameter of 864,000 miles (one hundred times that of earth's) and could hold 1.3 million planets the size of earth inside it. The star Betelgeuse, however, has a diameter of 100 million miles, which is larger than the earth's orbit around the sun. It takes sunlight, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, about 8.3 minutes to reach earth. Yet that same light would take more than four years to reach the nearest star, Alpha Centauri, some 24 trillion miles from earth. The galaxy to which our sun belongs, the Milky Way, contains hundreds of billions of stars. And astronomers estimate there are over 3 billion galaxies each containing billions of stars.

5



6



7

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

The universe also bears witness to the tremendous wisdom and knowledge of its Creator. Scientists now speak of the **Anthropic Principle**, which states that the universe appears to be carefully designed for the well-being of mankind. A change in the rate of Earth's rotation around the sun or on its axis would be catastrophic. The Earth would become either too hot or too cold to support life. If the moon were much nearer to the Earth, huge tides would inundate the continents. A change in the composition of the gases that make up our atmosphere would also be fatal to life.

8

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

The creation gives mute testimony to the intelligence of its Creator. Max Planck, winner of the Nobel Prize and one of the founders of modern physics, wrote, “**According to everything taught by the exact sciences about the immense realm of nature, a certain order prevails—one independent of the human mind ... this order can be formulated in terms of purposeful activity. There is evidence of an intelligent order of the universe to which both man and nature are subservient**”. It is no wonder that the psalmist wrote:

Psalm 19:1-4

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament Shows His handiwork. ² Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. ³ *There is* no speech nor language *Where* their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.

9

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

The testimony of nature to its Creator is so clear that it is only through willful unbelief that men can reject it.

Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Like those who deny Christ’s deity, those who reject Him as Creator give evidence of a mind darkened by sin and blinded by Satan.

10

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Secondly, Jesus also has preeminence over the creation because He is before all things. When the universe began, He already existed (John

1:1–2; 1 John 1:1). He told the Jews in **John 8:58**, “Before Abraham was born, I am”. He is saying that He is Yahweh, the eternally existing God.

The prophet Micah said of Him, “His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity” (**Mic. 5:2**). **Revelation 22:13** describes Him as “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Anyone existing before time began at the creation is eternal. And only God is eternal.

11

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

A third reason for Jesus’ preeminence over creation is that in

Him all things hold together. Not only did Jesus create the universe, He also sustains it. He maintains the delicate balance necessary to life’s existence. He quite literally holds all things together. He is the power behind every consistency in the universe. He is gravity and centrifugal and centripetal force. He is the One who keeps all the entities in space in their motion. He is the energy that hold the universe together.

12

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Scientists do not understand what holds an atom together. Look at an Oxygen atom. It has 8 positively charged protons and around 8 neutral neutrons. Like charges repel each other and these are very strong charges in very close proximity to each other. There is an energy called the "strong nuclear force" that holds it all together. Yet science does not understand the source or cause of this force. We can break this force and it results in the release of a tremendous amount of energy. This is part of what we see in a nuclear explosion.

13

Jesus in Relation to the Universe

Colossians 1:16-17

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

One day in the future God will dissolve the strong nuclear force. Peter describes that day as the one when "the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). With the strong nuclear force no longer operative, the nuclei of atoms will fly apart. The universe will literally explode. Until that time, we can be thankful that Christ "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). Jesus Christ must be God. He made the universe, existed outside and before it, and preserves it.

14

So What ...

So lets review Jesus' relation to the universe. He has created and sustains all things in heaven and earth (all Creation). Next week we will look at Jesus' relation to the Spiritual Realm.

However, He is the Creator of that as well!

Jesus existed before creation. All things were created by Him and they exist for His pleasure.

Take a moment to think. You exist for His pleasure! You as believers stand as a testimony to Jesus' mercy and grace.

He breathed into Adam and he became a living soul. He is able to transform us and He is able to resurrect us.

15

So What ...

If Jesus is God (vs 15) and is preeminent in all of Creation, then what about your life? We call Him Lord, but is He really the Lord of your life?

None of us are perfect, but we should be more like Him today than we were a month ago.

A restored life with Jesus starts at salvation. Do you know Jesus as your Savior? Are you trusting in Him for the removal of your sins?

For those who know Him, are you yield to the work He is doing in your life? Think about these things for we may see Him soon!

16