

INTRODUCTION

We are taking a brief break from our study of 1 Peter to focus on the road to the resurrection.

We expend so much energy preparing to celebrate Christ’s birth when whole the point of His birth was to live a perfect life, die for our sins and rise from the dead.

I decided to focus on the wonder of that incredible work of Jesus by devoting each Sunday to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

I have also prepared a daily devotional booklet to focus on Jesus every day of the month of March.

Today we will focus on the Incomparable Person of Christ.

Next Sunday we will focus on the Incredible Earthly Ministry of Christ.

The Following Sunday on the Intimate Upper Room Teaching of Christ.

Good Friday will focus on the Intense suffering of Christ.

Resurrection Sunday will focus on the Inconceivable Resurrection of Christ.

There are a multitude of Scripture passages we could explore regarding the person of Christ.

There are a number of approaches.

A wealth of information could be drawn from the prophecies concerning Christ.

Jesus informed the skeptical Pharisees that the Scriptures spoke of Him.

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. John 5:39-40

After His resurrection, Jesus (incognito) lead two travelers on a journey through the Old Testament. Luke 24:13-35

They were discussing the previous tumultuous events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus.

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

After Jesus disappeared they said to each other...

“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

I have chosen to focus on a most amazing passage of Scripture found in Colossians 1 where Paul packs a ton of assertions about Jesus in a short space.

Paul prayed that the Colossians would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in order to walk pleasing to Him being strengthened with His power for all endurance and long-suffering inspiring joyful thanksgiving to the Father who qualified them to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

God facilitated a grand transfer from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Beloved Son.

This was the Father’s immigration program.

It is through His Son that we HAVE redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

From there, Paul launched into a most amazing “resume” of the King into whose kingdom we have been transferred.

This is our New King, our loving Lord and leader.

He is a redeeming, forgiving King.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For 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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was

pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:15-20

I. He is the image of the invisible God

All through history man has tried to somehow depict God by some visible image.

It is impossible to visualize the invisible.

All efforts are futile and foolish.

God has expressly forbidden His people to make any graven image of the invisible God.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

The reason is that whatever man would design would fall pathetically and erroneously short of the original.

The greater reason is that God had in mind a perfect representation so that man could tangibly relate to Him.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. John 1:14-18

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Joh 14

For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2 Cor 4:6

The original is present in the image, which facilitates visible manifestation.
In Jesus, the physically unseen can be physically seen.

GOD, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

What was before unattainable and frightening became a wonderful reality in the experience of many.

John wrote about the awesome experience of a face to face relationship with the Word of life.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-3

The Bible is clear about the King of this wonderful kingdom into which we have been transferred.

He is not just some great man or prophet or person that walked this earth.
Jesus is God Himself.

Jesus came to proclaim and live out in a graphic way, the very nature of the Father.

He is fully God and at the same time full and complete humanity.

The Bible asserts both His deity and humanity.
Jesus declared His humanity and deity.

He is not some Ghost or untouchable spirit or lofty ideal.

We have the exact representation of God in the person of Christ.

He is infinitely Great

He is self-existent

He is self-sufficient

He is eternal

He is unchangeable

He knows everything

He is everywhere

He can do anything He wills to do.

He is beyond comprehension.

He is infinitely Good

He is full of grace and truth

He is merciful

He is faithful, kind, gentle, longsuffering

He is infinitely pure

He is holy, righteous, truth

All of the wonder of the invisible God shown through a physical body.

Implications

To fully understand the Father, we must study the Son revealed both in the Gospels and in the book of Revelation.

Learn how He loved people, lived righteously, proclaimed the truth, modeled new kingdom living.

See the actions, observe the attitudes and compassion, feel the touch, hear the voice, embrace the teaching, see the authority.

He is the exact image of the invisible infinite God.

II. He is the firstborn of all creation

There is for some, confusion by the use of the term “firstborn”.

Many ignore the indisputable fact that while “firstborn” can mean first born child, it very often was simply a term that means “first in rank or honor.”

That the phrase “the firstborn of every creature” cannot mean that the Son himself, too, is a creature, the first in a very long line, is clearly established by verse 16. He is prior to, distinct from, and highly exalted above every creature. As the firstborn he is the heir and ruler of all. Hendriksen

This means that the Jesus we know did not come into existence at Bethlehem. He has existed eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit in perfect harmony.

The connecting word “for” in the next verse illumines the focus or meaning of the term firstborn over all creation.

By using this word, Paul indicated that Jesus is the prominent player in creation itself.

He is both outside of creation and the author of it.

The following phrases reinforce this interpretation.

A. “All things were created THROUGH Him and FOR Him.”

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 through Him and for Him. Colossians 1:16

ALL things

Created at a point in time and still remain created.

What are the all things?

Things in the heavens – the invisible world

Things on earth – the visible world

Human being and spirit beings.

Both realms and dominions are the direct result of Christ’s action.

Christ brought all things into being by the word of His power.

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. Hebrews 11:3

All things were created by or through Christ.
Not only that, they were created for Him.

Man is not the center of all things.

Jesus is the center of all things and everything exists for His pleasure.

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.
Revelation 4:11

He Himself is the source of all creation.

The Jesus who came to earth and took on human flesh to live a perfect life, die a painful death for our sins and rose again is the same Jesus who spoke all things into being in all of their intricacy and majesty.

This is the King of the kingdom into which we have been transferred having been qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He is the supreme object of worship.

Nothing in creation, whether seen or unseen is worthy of such worship and attention.

B. He is before all things

This is most likely a further clarification or elaboration of “first born”.

Whereas “firstborn” speaks of rank in relation to creation.

“Before all things” emphasizes His preexistence in relation to creation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

C. He holds all things together

“...and in Him all things hold together. Colossians 1:17

He is the glue that holds this universe together.

The use of the perfect tense verb indicates that He initially glued the universe into a unity and continues to hold it together keeping it a cosmos (beauty) and not a chaos.

“He holds all things together by the word of His power.” Hebrews 1

III. He is the head of the church.

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. Colossians 1:18

Paul moved from Christ's relationship to all creation to His relationship to the church.

This body and head metaphor is rich in meaning.

The "head" refers to source of authority and control.

Scripture refers to the church as the body of Christ with Christ as the head.

The relationship of the church as a whole and as individuals bears the same relationship of the head to our physical body.

No head, no life. No head, no function.

If the body ignores direction from the head, you experience severe dysfunction.

Christ is our life and direction for living.

He was the first to experience a resurrected body. (firstborn from the dead)

Many before Him were resuscitated only to die again.

Jesus rose from the dead with a glorified body as the first among many scheduled to experience the same thing.

Philippians affirms that this is the hope of every citizen of Christ's kingdom.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Philippians 3:20-21

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Colossians 3:4

When we look at Jesus, we not only see the Father, but we see elements of our glorious future as well.

God not only promises spiritual conformity to Christ's image but physical as well.

This headship and resurrection puts Christ in the position of supremacy in the universe over all seen and unseen realities.

God made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Christ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. Ephesians 1:9-10

IV. He embodies all the complete fullness of God

"Fullness"

This is the same word used in Paul's prayer earlier that they be "filled" with the knowledge of God's will.

In this form it indicates one who has been "filled", "permeated", "saturated"
"dwell"

It pleased the Father that this very fullness "dwell" in him.

This word is the word "to live, or to inhabit" linked with the preposition "down" resulting in a more intensified concept to "make dwell", "settle as a permanent residence".

This is not just some but "all" the fullness of deity is a permanent feature.

Jesus, fully man but also fully God.

Eternally the God/Man

As stated earlier and summarized here, Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

He is the exact representation of the Father.

Sharing complete essence with the Son completely pleases the Father and the Holy Spirit.

No competition, no jealousy.

Complete unified diversity!

Is it even possible to have a meaningful relationship with such a God as this?

V. He is the source of reconciliation with God

Just as it pleased the Father that all his fullness dwell in Jesus, so it pleased the Father to reconcile all things to Himself through Jesus.

The truth of reconciliation is a most vital truth that deserves more explanation but that will be reserved for another time.

Reconciliation answers the issue of a shattered relationship between God and man; displacing man and disturbing God since the original rebellion of Adam and subsequent rebellion of all that followed.

Before we can appreciate Jesus' work to reconcile us to the Father, we must realize the gravity of our offense necessitating reconciliation.

Just because we do not feel an offense does not mean it does not exist.

Because I am unaware I offended you in some way does not negate that fact that you felt or actually were offended.

The Bible illuminates the tragic results of our offense in many different ways. You were dead, you were enemies, you were hostile, you were darkened, you were separated, you were children of wrath, alienated, you were strangers, you were without hope.

Our only hope is some means of reconciliation with God.

Unable to deal with the consequences of our offense we needed someone to intercede on our behalf.

Many think that the gospel is primarily about entering heaven and escaping hell. Some relish the environment of a perfect Kingdom while refusing relationship with the King of that kingdom.

The core of the gospel is reconciliation with a holy God through the saving work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

It was the Fathers good pleasure to reconcile all things to Himself through Jesus, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether

things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— Colossians 1:20-22

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

More than 2000 years ago there was a man born contrary to the laws of nature. He laid aside his purple robe for a peasant's tunic. He was rich, yet for our sake he became poor.

This man lived in poverty and was raised in obscurity. He received no formal education and never possessed wealth or widespread influence.

He never traveled extensively.

He seldom crossed the boundary of the country in which he lived.

But this man's life has changed the course of history.

In infancy he startled a king.

In childhood he amazed religious scholars.

In manhood he ruled the course of nature—walked on stormy waves and hushed the raging sea to sleep.

He healed multitudes without medicine and made no charge for his services.

He never practiced psychiatry.

Yet he has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near.

He never wrote a book.

Yet his life has inspired more books than any other man.

He never wrote a song.

Yet he has furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters combined.

He never founded a college,

Yet all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students.

He never marshaled an army.

He never drafted a soldier or fired a gun.

Yet no leader ever had more rebels surrender to him without a shot fired.

Herod could not kill him. Satan could not seduce him. His enemies could not destroy him.

The grave could not hold him.

After three days he rose from the dead, alive forevermore!

He is the ever-perfect One. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

This man stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed by God, acknowledged by angels, adored by his people, and feared by demons as the risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The incomparable Jesus embraced life on earth in order to proudly present us to His Father to enjoy unrestricted, unencumbered relationship for all eternity.

The symbolism of the Lord's Supper celebrates that remarkable reconciliation which also inspires reconciliation among the member of His body.