

THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

Colossians 1:15-20

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Paul wrote Colossians...to counteract the heresy of false teachers who had infiltrated the church.
- b. From the content of the letter...we know that the teaching of these false teachers...centered on three critical errors.
- c. #1, They denied that salvation was by grace...their doctrine of salvation was a combination of faith and works.
- d. #2, They misinterpreted the meaning and purpose of the Christian life...they insisted on strict self-denial in some areas...and encouraged license in others.
- e. #3, They depreciated the person of Jesus...they denied both the humanity and deity of Jesus...they said that Jesus only appeared to be human when He was on earth... and that He was only one of many spirit beings who bridged the space between God and man.
- f. False teaching about Jesus still abounds today...both in the church and in the world...especially at Christmas time.
- g. As we continue to focus on Jesus in this Christmas season...we look at these verses in which Paul declares that Jesus is God...Creator...and Redeemer.

II. JESUS IS GOD-

- a. *Colossians 1:15 (NIV) "He is the image of the invisible God..."*...the word translated "image" means an exact likeness...like the image on a coin ...or the reflection of a mirror.
- b. In this verse the word "image" has two ideas...#1, It speaks of Jesus' nature ... Jesus is the image of God in the sense that He is exactly the same as God...He has the same nature, character, essence and attributes as God...what is true of God ... is also true of Jesus.
- c. The only way that Jesus can be the image of the invisible God...is if Jesus Himself is God... *2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV) "The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God..."*... *Hebrews 1:3 (NIV) "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being..."*

- d. #2, This phrase also speaks of the incarnation of Jesus... when Jesus was born in Bethlehem ...He made the invisible God visible...He revealed God to us...He manifested God to us.
- e. In the incarnation of Jesus...the invisible God took on humanity...He took on a human body and a human nature...and He revealed Himself to us.
- f. The miracle of Christmas is not that a baby was born...but that the baby who was born in Bethlehem was God in human flesh.

III. **JESUS IS CREATOR-** (JESUS IS GOD...)

- a. *Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV) "... (Jesus is) the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*
- b. Jesus is the "firstborn over all creation"...this phrase does not mean that Jesus is a created being or a part of creation...but it speaks of His rule, reign, dominion and Lordship over all of creation.
- c. These verses give three reasons why Jesus is Lord of creation...#1, Jesus is Lord of creation because He is the cause of creation....Jesus is not a created being or a part of creation...He is the Creator...vs. 16 says that He "all things."
- d. Jesus created all things...every creature, every element, every sphere, every dimension, every principal...all things physical, material and spiritual...all things visible and invisible...Jesus created them all...He owns them all...and He rules them all.
- e. #2, Jesus is Lord of creation because He is the center of creation....vs. 16 says that all things were created "for Him"...all of creation finds its aim, purpose and meaning in Jesus.
- f. The purpose of creation...and the purpose of your life and mine...is to bring honor and glory to the Creator...we do that by knowing Him...loving Him ...surrendering our lives to Him...and living for Him.
- g. Right now creation is enslaved in corruption...but one day Christ will set creation free from the bondage of sin...and from the smallest electron to the mightiest planet ...all of creation will display the glory of Christ.
- h. #3, Jesus is Lord of creation because He is the controller of creation....verse 17 says that in Jesus "all things hold together."

- i. Jesus is the One who is sustaining the universe...He is the One who is controlling and holding all of creation together...our existence...and the very existence of the universe depends on Jesus.

IV. **JESUS IS THE REDEEMER-** (GOD...CREATOR)

- a. *Colossians 1:18-20 (NIV) "And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*
- b. Because of sin...creation is ruined and man is separated from God...Jesus came into the world to rescue fallen man...and ruined creation...from the effects of sin.
- c. The Bible says that Jesus did that...through His blood which He shed on the cross for our sins.
- d. Through His sacrificial death...and His victorious resurrection ... Jesus conquered sin, death and Satan...assuring that one day all of creation will be redeemed and restored from the curse of sin.
- e. And more importantly...by His death and resurrection...Jesus made a way for lost human beings...to be reconciled to God...and to have peace with Him.
- f. To receive the redemption and salvation Jesus has made possible...you must confess your sins to God...and receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.
- g. When you do that...you will be redeemed and receive His salvation...and you will be made part of His church...the redeemed people of God...forever.

V. **CONCLUSION-** (JESUS IS GOD...CREATOR...REDEEMER)

- a. You might not understand why it took the death of Jesus on the cross...to save you from your sin...but that is what it took.
- b. How do you think you will be saved from your sin...and reconciled to God... and go to Heaven when you die...if you refuse to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?...there is no other way...there is no plan "B".
- c. If Jesus is Lord of creation...if He is Lord of all...do you think you will go to Heaven...if you refuse to surrender your life to His Lordship?

- d. You don't make Jesus the Lord of your life...He is the Lord of your life whether you receive Him as Lord or not...the Bible says that one day every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.
- e. The critical issue is when you do this...you will either do it in this life willingly surrendering your life to Him...or you will do it in the final judgment...when you will be forced to bow before the One you rejected...before you are lost forever.
- f. There is no one so good that they do not need a Savior...and there is no one so bad that Jesus cannot and will not save them if they turn to Him.