

The Preeminent Christ

Colossians 1:15-18

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I'm going to back up. I always like to back up so we have context, and I don't want to get bogged down in the context, but back up to verse 13. We're going to go beyond the text to verse 20. Paul says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,"—I want you to note that statement at the end of verse 13—"the kingdom of his dear Son," in the Greek that is literally the Son of His love because everything from verses 14-20 is all going to be about Jesus Christ.

Just a little secret, I'm going to come back to them, but just see as we read that, pick up on the phrase, "in whom," "who is," "by him," and "He is," through this section. Verse 14, "In whom,"—referring to Christ—"we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by 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 might have,"—here's our theme—"the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him,"—there's the phrase—"should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

A man by the name of Erich Sauer said, "If you wish to be disappointed, look to others. If you wish to be downhearted, look to yourself. If you wish to be encouraged, look upon Jesus Christ." I don't know about you, but tonight I wish to be encouraged. Amen? I love that old hymn, Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace. If there was ever a passage in the Bible—and I do mean, Bible, Old or New Testament—to where you see the beauty and the majesty, the deity and the glory, and the authority and the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, it is in this passage. The theologians call it one of the greatest, many call it the greatest, Christological passage in the entire Bible.

Let me give you a couple others that you can look up as well, just if you're taking notes. Study John 1:1-18. It's the prologue to John's gospel. If you really want to know about who Jesus is, John 1:1-18. The second one would be Philippians 2:5-11. That's another famous Christological passage known as the kenosis passage where Jesus emptied Himself and, ". . . took upon him the form of a servant . . . became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross . . . God also hath highly exalted him." The third, and there are others, this is just an abbreviated list, is Hebrews 1:1-3. Of all these passages I would say that this Colossians passage is the favored of mine or the standout of the glories of Christ.

Why should this great passage on Jesus Christ appear in Paul's epistle to the Colossians? The

answer is because false teachers who had entered the church were giving Jesus a prominent place but not a preeminent place, or an important place but not a preeminent place. You know, there are a lot of religions that are really not anywhere near Christian religions—they think Jesus is a prophet, Jesus is an ascended master, Jesus is some kind of a guru, Jesus is some kind of enlightened individual—but they don't give Jesus the preeminent place. When we see this word "preeminent," it literally means highest place, nothing higher, no one more important than Jesus Christ. Be careful of those who say, "Well, we think Jesus is one of many ways to God," or "Jesus is one path that you can choose," or "There are other prophets or ways to God," or "Jesus wasn't really divine, He had the Christ consciousness," they'll speak about Christ consciousness and deny the deity of Christ. There's nothing more important for you as a believer than to know the Jesus of the Bible, not a false Jesus, not an artificial made-up Jesus, but the Jesus of the Scriptures. You're going to see why it's so important tonight. It's so very, very important for us to have a grasp of who Christ is.

The false teachers who were called Gnostics were teaching that Jesus just was one of many emanations that came from the true God and He was one of many rungs on the ladder that you climbed back to God, or ways back to God, which is so very popular today in many different eastern religions and philosophies and cults and isms that we have in our world today.

Paul said in verse 18, ". . . that in all things he,"—Christ—"might have the preeminence," no one to be higher than Jesus Christ. Do you know that it is impossible to have a thought of Christ that's too exalted? You can't think too highly of Jesus Christ. This preeminence means that Jesus is to have first place in all things, so ask yourself tonight before we even begin to unpack this passage, "Does Jesus have first place in every aspect of your life? In your thoughts? In your attitudes? In your actions? In your marriage? In your job? In your ministry? Is Jesus number one preeminent in your life?"

Why should Jesus though have preeminence? Paul gives us three reasons Jesus is to have preeminence. I've taken all the information in this passage and I've condensed it into these three reasons. They'll appear on the screen, but I want you to see them in your text, if you're taking notes. First of all, Christ should have preeminence because He's the visible image of the invisible God. Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He's the revealer. He reveals God to us. Look at verse 15. Paul says, "Who is the image of the invisible God,"—there it is, stop right there. Notice it says, "Who is." Who is this "Who is"? It's back in verse 13, ". . . the kingdom of his dear Son," or the Son of His love. That's a reference to Jesus Christ. Jesus "is the image of the invisible God."

I want to note these statements again. In verse 14, we have "In whom." This is a reference to Jesus. In verse 15, we have "Who is the image of the invisible God,"—that's Jesus. In verse 16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible," that's Jesus. At the end of verse 16, ". . . by him, and for him;" verse 17, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Verse 18, "And he is," and verse 19, ". . . in him," and verse 20 we have, ". . . his cross, by him . . . himself . . . by him." All this is a reference over and over and over and over and over again to the Son of His love, which is of course,

Jesus Christ.

Notice in verse 15 that He is called, “. . . the image of the invisible God.” Do you know that God is invisible? You can’t see God. Sometimes people say, “Well, I can’t really believe in God because I can’t see Him.”

I heard the story about a Puritan preacher that was out on a street corner one time preaching. An atheist actually started to heckle him and said, “I don’t believe in God.” He said, “I’ve never seen God. I’ve never seen God, so I don’t believe in God.”

The Puritan preacher said, “Well, doest thou believe that thou hast brains?”

The atheist said, “Well, yes I believe I have brains.”

He said, “Hast thou ever seen thy brains?”

He said, “No, I’ve never seen my brains.”

And then he said, “And thou thinkest thou hast brains?”

Just because you haven’t seen something doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist, so God is invisible.

Why is God invisible? Because “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” It is only in the incarnation of Christ that God becomes visible to our human eye, comprehensible that we can reach out and touch Him and see Him. When we get to heaven, we’re going to see Jesus in a glorified body that was the same body He had on earth. He’ll still bear the scars of our redemption, and we’ll be able to look on Him. Jesus “. . . is the image of the invisible God.”

Write down these verses. First Timothy 1:17 says God is, “. . . eternal, immortal, invisible.” In John 1:18, John says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son,”—Jesus Christ—“which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” In 1 Timothy 6:16, referring to God, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” God is unseeable, but He became seeable in the incarnation, the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God manifested.

Now, Jesus came to reveal God to us. He’s called here, “. . . the image of the invisible God.” He wasn’t made the image of God, He is the image of God. What does it mean? The word “image” here we get our word icon from. We also get our word picture or photo from it. It means a representation, which is an exact representation, or manifestation. In Philippians 2, it was one of those passages I said to read and study about the Person of Christ, it says that Jesus, “. . . being in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,” who is in the very form of God. That Greek word “form” is *morph*. It doesn’t mean outward shape, but it just means essence—Jesus in essence is God. This Philippian passage, and all these other passages—Hebrews 1, John 1—are clearly teaching the deity of Jesus Christ and

also that He reveals God to us, that He is “ . . . the image of the invisible God.”

Image was used in Matthew 22:20 where they were talking about a coin that had the image of Caesar on it, “Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them,”—flipping the coin back—“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.” It’s an image. As I said, we get our word picture or portrait, we also get our word icon from this word “image.” It means that Jesus is a perfect picture of God because He is God. He’s God the Son who reveals God the Father. Again, we have the doctrine of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All three Persons in the Godhead are equal in essence. The Father’s not more God than the Son; the Son is not more God than the Holy Spirit; they’re all equally divine. They’re separate in their functions and their roles, they’re separate Persons, but there’s one God in essence—the three in One.

Now, remember in John 14 when Jesus had promised to go to heaven and prepare us a place? And then He said, “And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest.” I’m glad Thomas said that because Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and then listen to what Jesus said, “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

The only way to know God the Father is through God the Son. If you’re wrong about Jesus, you’re wrong about God. If you don’t have Jesus right, you don’t have God right. When He mentioned the Father, Philip says, “Lord, shew us the Father,”—if we can just see Him, then we’d be satisfied. I like Thomas and I like Philip. They just lay it all out, “Lord, we don’t know the way. We don’t know where You’re going.” Philip, “Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” What did Jesus say? “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Now, don’t misunderstand that. Jesus is not saying, “I’m the Father;” He’s saying, “I reveal the Father.” That’s exactly what He’s referring to. “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.” Why? Because They’re one in essence; two in Persons, but one in essence. He’s the revealer of God the Father.

In Hebrews 1:3, the other passage I mentioned, the writer of Hebrews says, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” so the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus Christ, concerning God is, “ . . . the express image of his person.” Jesus is God manifested in the flesh. How? By His incarnation, becoming a man, by His miracles. On Sunday morning we’re studying the gospel of Luke, and we’ve been looking at Jesus healing the leper and the paralytic and the miracles that He performed, only God can do that.

I was thinking about it the other day, Jesus walked on water. How cool is that? He walked on water. Can you imagine being out fishing and you’re tired and want to go home. Your buddy is the one that owns the boat and wants to stay a little longer. You say, “Okay, well, I’m leaving,” and you grab your pole and step out of the boat and just walk across the lake and go home. There’s people who try to explain that miracle away by saying that Jesus could see rocks under the water and knew exactly where to step when He was walking on the water. I don’t think so.

He's the Master of the ocean, of the land, and the sea, and the skies; and He just walks on water. How cool is that!

Jesus heals the lame and gives sight to the blind, raises the dead, amazing! Jesus rose from the dead! Romans says that it sets Him off, horizons Him off, as being the Son of God. If Jesus rose from the dead, I think it's a pretty good idea to believe what He said. I think it's a pretty good idea to follow Him, that He is the way, the truth, the life. Christ should have preeminence because He is the revealer of God the Father. He is God and can reveal God.

If you want to know a person, the best way to get to know a person is to talk to that person. You can hear second hand about a person, but if you go directly to that person. If you want to know about God, you come to Christ. He is God, and He can reveal the truth about who He is.

Write down John 5:23 where Jesus said, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." Write down 2 Corinthians 4:6. It says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." I love that. ". . . the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,"—where? —"in the face of Jesus Christ."

Just a little footnote, and I don't know if I can explain this or not, these words were penned by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through a man called Paul. But remember, just 30 years before this he was known as Saul, and he didn't believe in Jesus. He hated Jesus, and he was persecuting and killing Christians. He was a very strict religious Jew, so what happened? How do you get Saul of Tarsus to say this exalted truth about the Galilean, Nazarene peasant, Jesus of Nazareth? Nothing short of being transformed by the risen Christ, meeting Christ on the road to Damascus, Acts 9. Saul's conversion is the only explanation for his understanding of who Jesus is. He went for three years out into the Arabian Desert and was taught directly by the Lord, and he unfolds this beautiful knowledge of Christ to us in the pages of Colossians, but a marvelous, marvelous thought that this once blasphemer is now an exalter and glorifier of who Jesus Christ truly is.

Let me give you the second reason why Christ should have preeminence. Not only does He reveal God to us because He is God; but secondly, He's the Sovereign over all creation. This is the heart of the passage—Sovereign and source of all creation. In one or two words: He's the Creator. First of all, He's the revealer; secondly, He's the Creator. Let's read the end of verse 15. It says, ". . . the firstborn of every creature." I'm reading from the King James translation. That word "every creature" means all creation, the whole created world. Why? Verse 16, "For by him,"—that is, again, Jesus Christ the Son of His love—"were all things created,"—there it is —"that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers,"—even angels, good and bad, Satan, demons, all principalities and powers—"all things were created by him."

This is why I don't have any time or patience for people that want to spend energy and effort

trying to figure out whether or not there are extraterrestrials or little green men on the moon. We have supposedly intelligent people spending thousands and millions of dollars with radio towers directed to outer space waiting for some Martian to say, "Hello, how you doing down there?" What insanity. I've always said, "If there are any little green men out there, Jesus made 'em, and Jesus is my Redeemer, my Savior, so everything's cool." If they're out there, He made 'em because there's not anything made that wasn't made but by Jesus Christ. They're under His dominion, and He's to have preeminence. I think it's the height of stupidity to be trying to find little green men on the moon when we need to take care of people here on earth, and God has come from heaven in Christ to reveal Himself to us, and we just stumble over that revelation of who Christ is.

Going back to the text, He's, " . . . the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist," or are held together. What an exalted statement this is about the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Why does Paul focus on Jesus as Lord of all creation? Again, the false teachers. They actually believed that Jesus was created, "He's not the Creator, He's not eternal, He Himself was created." This is what's known as the ancient Arian heresy which actually today was picked up by what's called the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses cult, which is not a Christian organization, they do not teach orthodox Christian doctrine, teaches that Jesus Christ is a created being, that God created Him first as Michael the Archangel, that Jesus was made as Michael the Archangel. Nowhere in the Bible do you find that taught, and never have I ever had a Jehovah's Witness at my doorstep be able to show me any evidence from Scripture that Jesus was Michael the Archangel, that He's created by God and He then created all other things. The Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation renders that wrong, "He has created all other things," so they get around the idea that He was not created, but the Bible teaches that He is eternal. Remember, He's God, and God is eternal. He was never created, He's the Creator of all things. Jesus is the Creator of all creation.

Notice verse 15, He's, " . . . the firstborn of every creature." What does that "firstborn" mean? Well, it doesn't mean that He was created, as I said, it's the Arian heresy, and the Gnostics of Paul's day in Colossae taught that actually there was a god who was so holy and righteous and so powerful that he could not touch matter or create matter, that he let out these emanations, these demi-gods, and then as you got farther away from the true God, there's this final god who is evil, and he created matter. They actually believe that all physical matter is intrinsically evil. The Bible doesn't teach that.

Sometimes Christians mistakenly get the idea that our physical bodies are evil. No, they can be used for evil purposes—we have a fallen, sinful nature—but your body is neutral. Your body can be redeemed, and it will be redeemed. The Bible says, " . . . glorify God in your body . . . which are God's." Your body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, and He wants us to be sanctified in our bodies and how we live. So, the thought that the material world is sinful is

taught by the false teachers—by the Gnostics, by the Jehovah's Witnesses' Arian heresy concerning Christ.

Notice again, verse 16, it says, "For by him were all things created." As I said, the very statement in the English translation precludes the idea that Jesus was created. If all things were created by Him . . . and that phrase "all things," do you know what it means in the Greek? It means all things. Nothing is excluded. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," so God is the source of all things.

Where did we come from? Why are we here? Why is there something rather than nothing? "Well, I believe that it was a big bang." Well, what caused the bang? What banged? Where did the bang come from? I mean, it's just insane. You either believe that there's an eternal, all-existent God or some form of eternal matter. And, where did the matter come from? "I don't know. I don't know." Take your pick. I happen to believe Genesis 1:1. I don't believe in evolution. I believe that, " . . . God created the heaven and the earth." Amen? That everything came from God and that Person that created all things, Genesis 1, is none other than our Savior, Lord, Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who's also our friend, by the way. Jesus becomes your friend as well as your Creator. He's the One that created all things. What a marvelous truth that is! It doesn't mean He was created.

The word in the Greek is *prōtos*. It doesn't convey chronological order as much as it conveys priority and seniority. It means Jesus is the Sovereign over all creation. It means the most important one. Even the term "firstborn" actually had within it the idea the favored one. The firstborn was always the chosen son, the one that got the majority of the inheritance, so this term was used for that. It also conveys the most important one. It's interesting that in the Old Testament Esau was born first, yet Jacob was called the firstborn because he was the chosen one. Israel, as a nation, is called in Exodus 4:22, the firstborn among the nations, yet there were other nations before the nation of Israel, but God chose Israel. God chose Jacob. Jesus is the chosen One, the favored One. That's what that word means. Jesus is Lord over all creation.

Paul gives us four reasons why, and I'm going to throw those points on the screen. I want you to see them in your Bible as well. Reason one is He is the creator of all creation. We already read that. Notice it in verse 16, "For by him,"—which could be translated in Him or through Him—"were all things created." So, He is the creator of all creation. Again, understand and study Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God,"—it takes care of atheism—"God,"—takes care of polytheism, there's only one God—"created,"—takes care of evolution—"the heaven and the earth." Jesus created, He can take care of us.

The second reason He is the Lord of all creation is He is the purpose and the goal of all creation. He's the purpose and the goal of all creation. Look at verse 16. It says, " . . . all things were created by him,"—that He's the source—"and for him,"—He's the goal. They came by Him, and they're going unto Him, so Jesus is the Source and He's the goal of all creation.

Did you know that creation points to God? It all points to God. If you don't understand that, then you're not going to understand creation. Creation has meaning only when we understand that it's God's handiwork and points to Him. I love the passage that says, ". . . and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." It doesn't mean that they literally have hands, but it means that trees, when they blow in the wind . . . next time you see the branches of a tree blowing in the wind, they are praising God. Remember when Jesus said, "If they don't praise Me, the rocks will cry out?" So, all creation gives glory to God. I know they would've been singing, Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. All creation gives glory to God, so should we.

Let me give you the third, He is before all creation, notice verse 17, "And he is before all things." This is what is known as Christ's eternal preexistence. He existed before Bethlehem, He existed through all eternity. Jesus is eternal, John 1:1. Remember I gave you John 1:1-18? What does John 1:1 say? "In the beginning,"—have a familiar ring?—"was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "In the beginning was the Word," that's a reference to Jesus Christ who was there in the beginning of time. He already existed. ". . . and the Word was with God," literally means face to face, so you have God the Father, God the Son, "and the Word was God." In the Greek it's actually and God was the Word. In verse 14 of that same chapter, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." What a marvelous truth that is!

In John 8:58 Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." He used the word *eg S eimí*. Now, you would normally say, "Before Abraham was, I was," but He said, "I Am." Remember when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and he wanted to know who am I talking to? "Whom do I say I'm sent by when I go to Egypt?" "Tell them, I Am hath sent you." Jesus is the eternal God. In Revelation 1:8, where Jesus speaking said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Jesus is the "I Am." He's the A and the Z, the beginning and the end, the Almighty.

Here's the fourth reason Christ should have preeminence as a creator, He is the sustainer of all creation. I love it, verse 17, in that little phrase, ". . . and by him all things consist." You see that word "consist"? It means held together. Everything is being held together by Jesus.

A couple of days ago we had this big solar eclipse, people freaking out over a solar eclipse—passing out, jumping for joy, the chills, the emotion, the freakout. I'm thinking, No big deal, my Redeemer made it all. He designed it all. He controls it all. He's like, "What'd you think of that? Pretty cool, huh? Pretty cool!" He has it at the right distance, the right time, the right place. He keeps everything in its place, everything rotating as it should, distance, gravity. It's all designed by God. Atoms. What keeps atoms from not exploding? Jesus holds it together. He's the atomic glue. He holds the whole world in His hand, right? That little gospel song that seems so simple yet so profound, He's got the whole world in His hands. I almost started to sing it there for a minute. It's kind of hard to quote it and not sing it. He's got you and me, brother, in his hands . . . He's got you and me, sister, in his hands . . . He keeps everything.

People are freaking out about global warming and stars falling from heaven and the moon become blood and all the stuff that's going to happen and the sun be darkened and all the earth shaking. He's in control. He created it all! He sits on the throne. He reigns in the heavens. It's all held together by Him, the fine-tuning of the universe. Jesus makes the universe a cosmos instead of a chaos. He holds the lives in His omnipotent hand. We can trust Him.

Here's the third. First, He's the visible, " . . . image of the invisible God," revealer; second, He's the Sovereign over all creation, the Creator; third, He's the head of the Church. We're only going to go to verse 18, so follow with me. "He is the head of the body,"—he uses that metaphor for the church—"the church," the *ekklesia* "who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead," so the church has its origin and source in Christ, He's, " . . . the firstborn,"—*prototokos*—"from the dead; that in all things,"—literally, in all—"he,"—that's Jesus—"might have the preeminence." So, Jesus is Lord of the creation or cosmos, and He is Lord of the Church.

There are two headships of Christ: Christ is the head of the cosmos; Christ is the head of the Church. You have Him Lord of creation and Lord of the new creation, the Church, the body of Christ. Someone said, "The head of nature is the head of grace." I love that. The head of nature is also the head of grace. Paul changes the focus from Christ's preeminence over natural creation to Christ's preeminence over the new spiritual creation, the Church, the body of Christ.

Christ's preeminence is seen in revelation, in creation, and now in exaltation. This verse is teaching that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church—no pope, no priest, no bishop, no cardinals, no pastor, no man. No human being is the head of the Church. It's blasphemy to think that you can usurp the place of Christ and be the head of the Church. Christ is the head of the Church. It's His body.

You know the most important thing in your physical body is your head? Have you ever heard the statement, "Protect the head at all cost"? You can lose a hand and go through life; you can lose a foot and go through life; you can lose a leg or a limb and go through life, but you can't lose your head. You'd be kind of messed up, wouldn't you? Have you ever heard the expression, "A chicken with its head cut off"? We take our brains for granted. Everything we see, smell, feel, touch, taste, think, everything comes through your brain. There's a difference between the brain and the mind—the brain is the physical organ, the mind is that God conscious, made in the image of God. How does this grey matter have emotion, have the ability to reason and think abstractly? How does all that work? I know a little bit about this.

A little over twelve years ago I actually had a stroke, and I still have some of the symptoms from my stroke. Everyone's got these ideas about what I can do to make it better and help, an improvement, and they don't realize that neurological damage can't really be restored in this case. You think about how valuable are all your feelings, all your sensations, all your emotions. Every motor function of your body is your brain telling you what to do.

Christ is the head of the Church. Any leaders in the church today are under Christ's authority,

Christ's headship. So, revelation, creation, exaltation over the Church. You can do a whole study of verse 18 on the Church. He's talking about the body of Christ, which is the called out assembly of true believers of which Christ is the head.

How did Jesus become the head of the Church? Real quickly, His incarnation, His crucifixion, His resurrection. Look at verse 18, " . . . the firstborn from the dead." Do you know what that means? It's the same Greek word, *prōtōtos*, the most important one to ever raise from the dead. We just had Easter. Jesus Christ is the first Person to ever be bodily raised from the dead in a glorified, eternal body. He becomes the first fruit of those who sleep. He's the prototype, the forerunner, of our future glorified bodies. The most important Person that ever rose from the dead is Jesus because He is in a glorified, eternal body, which is a prototype of our future resurrection.

Not only His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, but His ascension and His exaltation—seated at the right hand of God the Father, which isn't literally a right hand, that "right hand" means place of authority. Jesus is seated in the place of authority. Again, Philippians 2, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It closes, verse 18, " . . . that in all things he might have the preeminence." It's hard to stop, verse 19, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Jesus Christ is the revealer, the Creator, the exalted head of the Church. He must have preeminence in all things—in your life, in your marriage, in your profession, in your pleasure, in your ministry, in your conversation, in your worship, in your service, and in the Church. Amen? This is a great passage to continue to study, memorize, and to remember who Jesus is.

Next week we'll move into the work of Jesus in that He reconciles and redeems us to God by His cross. Let's pray.