

## The Book of Colossians

### Lesson 4

#### Study Notes

#### The Preeminence of Christ

**Instructor: Dr. Douglas Woody**

**Text: Colossians 1:13-18.**

*Introduction: The enemies of the church were denying the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ and Paul here in this study is giving us the supremacy of Christ and His very lofty, and very exalted position. Paul is going after one of the oldest heresies in the church; the denial of Jesus' Deity. Besides Gnosticism there was the heresy of Arianism. It originated with an Alexandrian priest named Arius, who maintained that the Son of God was created by the Father and was therefore neither \_\_\_\_\_ with the Father, nor of the same substance or essence. The Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 answered this heresy saying, "The Son is very Man of very man, and very God of very God." We know that the Devil is behind every attempt to deny the Lord Jesus His preeminent place in our lives and the world.*

*Jesus Christ is the one in the whole of God's universe has the absolute \_\_\_\_\_ to occupy the first place in your life and mine; others may seek to have the first place, but it is not their right to seek or to obtain it. The Devil seeks the first place in your life and mine, but it is not his right to have it. I have often said that the Devil is jealous of us because we have something that he can never have, that is we have redemption and forgiveness from God, something he will never know. Here are three good reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ alone has the right of being first in our lives.*

1. Because He \_\_\_\_\_ us.

**Colossians 1:16**

***Proverbs 16:4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.***

***Isaiah 43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.***

2. Because He has \_\_\_\_\_ us.

**Colossians 1:13-14**

We belong to Him by legal right, for He has purchased us with His own life's blood.

***1Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.***

3. Because He is to have the preeminence.

**Colossians 1:18**

The Greek word for preeminence here is "proteuo" (prote-yoo'-o) meaning to be first in \_\_\_\_\_ or influence.

Some food for thought: When the Lord Jesus is supreme in our lives the following things are true.

1. There is supreme \_\_\_\_\_ to His Person. We love Him more than any other person or thing, and more than the love we have for ourselves.
2. There is unquestioning \_\_\_\_\_ to His commands. **John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.**
3. There is complete submission to His \_\_\_\_\_. When the Lord Jesus occupies the foremost place in our lives, we should be willing to serve Him in the sphere of His choice, to suffer should He will it, and if necessary, die for Him.

Note: Christians are mainly divided into three classes: those who give Him place, those who give Him prominence, and those who give Him preeminence. The preeminence of the Lord Jesus affords us an explanation of many of the mysteries of life which, apart from His supremacy are hard and indeed almost impossible to understand.

### I. The Person of Christ.

**Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:**

There are nine marks of identification of Christ which make Him different from and superior to any other person who has ever lived.

1. *He is the image of the invisible God.*

**John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.**

The false teachers of that day taught that matter was \_\_\_\_\_, including the human body. They taught that Jesus Christ did not have a real \_\_\_\_\_ since this would have put Him in contact with evil matter. In the incarnation the invisible God became visible in Christ: deity was clothed with humanity. Christ in God: visible, audible, approachable, knowable, and \_\_\_\_\_.

2. *He is the firstborn of every creature.*

"Firstborn" indicates His priority before all creation. His headship of all creation does not mean that He was \_\_\_\_\_ first, He was before any created thing existed. The words "firstborn of every creature" can be rendered "the firstborn \_\_\_\_\_ all creation" making Him superior to and distinct from the entire sphere of created beings and things. He was there when creation began.

Gnosticism taught that Jesus was an emanation from God; emanation is defined as a being or force that is a manifestation of God. The Greek word "firstborn" is "*prototokos*" meaning "\_\_\_\_\_ all creation."

**Colossians 1:16**

3. *By Him were all things created.*

Gnosticism taught that a *demiurge* (a heavenly being, subordinate to the \_\_\_\_\_, responsible for the creation of the universe.) They held that God created a creature beneath Him; then that creature created a creature beneath him, that creature created a creature beneath him. The first word "created"

is in the Greek aorist tense and views creation as a definite \_\_\_\_\_ fact. Creation is a past, perfect work. The second word "created" is in the Greek \_\_\_\_\_ tense and speaks of the resulting state. Creation stands created, a permanent work. All of creation exist because of Him. He is responsible for the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_. It is interesting to note there are gradations in rank in spiritual intelligences: thrones, dominions, principalities, powers. There are no powers in existence that He is not the authority over; for He is their Creator.

4. *For Him all things were created.*

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ is the central purpose of all creation.

5. *He is before all things.*

**Colossians 1:17** *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

He was before all creation. He is the Great I Am of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Through Christ all things hold together, cohere, are sustained, and united. He maintains harmony and order. All things are created by Him and are controlled by Him. Apart from Christ all things would disintegrate: He holds the stars in their courses, He directs the planets in their orbits, and He controls the laws of the universe. We have a cosmos not a \_\_\_\_\_.

6. *By Him all things consist.*

The word "consist" means "to put together by way of composition and combination for establishment or exhibit; to \_\_\_\_\_ that which is established.

**Hebrews 1:3**

7. *He is the head of the body, the church.*

**Colossians 1:18**

He directs, controls, guides, and governs the church. The church is His body; He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of its life. In Ephesians we have the emphasis on the fact that the church is the body of Christ down here in this world. In Colossians the emphasis is upon the \_\_\_\_\_ of the body, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians emphasizes the oneness of Christ; Colossians emphasizes the completeness of Christ.

Note: "who is the beginning" The word *beginning* is used in three senses: (1) prior in time (2) supremacy in rank (3) creative initiative. Christ is not the first of a series, but the \_\_\_\_\_.

8. *That in all things He might have the preeminence.*

Christ has unshared supremacy; He has first place; He is in a class by Himself; He is eminent above all others. It is not enough for Christ to be present, nor prominent; He must be preeminent.

9. *In Him should all fullness dwell.*

**Colossians 1:1** *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;* Christ is a manifestation of God, the Sovereign Creator, and the Head of the church. The sum total of all the power and attributes are in Christ. To see Christ is to see God the Father. *All fullness* is divine perfection, not just a part. The word *dwell* indicates permanent residence.