

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Colossians 1:13-23**.
- B. We live in an age of “syncretism” (trying to mix and harmonize various schools of thought). The church today desperately needs the message of Colossians. People today are trying to take the best from various religious systems and manufacture their own private religion.
- C. This lesson is on the preeminence of Christ. No NT paragraph contains more concentrated doctrine about JC than this one. Paul makes 4 unanswerable arguments.

## I. CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR (Col. 1:13-14).

Man’s greatest problem is sin—a problem that can never be solved by a philosopher or religious teacher. Sinners need a Savior. These two verses present a vivid picture of the four saving actions of X.

- A. **He delivered us** (1:13a).
  - 1. This deliverance involved something else: we were delivered from the authority of Satan and the powers of darkness. The Gnostic false teachers believed in an organization of evil spirits that controlled the world (1:16; 2:10,15).
  - 2. If as a Xian you are afraid of the dark, be afraid because of any human or physical thing that might hurt you, but do not be afraid of anything else!
- B. **He translated us** (1:13b).
  - 1. Depending on your translation, X transferred, translated, or transplanted us.
  - 2. This release is from the dominion, tyranny, control, authority, darkness/gloom of Satan.
  - 3. JC did not release us from bondage, only to have us wander aimlessly. He moved us into His own kingdom of light and made us victors over Satan’s kingdom of darkness.
- C. **He redeemed us** (1:14a).
  - 1. This word means “to release a prisoner by the payment of a ransom.”
  - 2. Paul did not suggest that Jesus paid a ransom to Satan in order to rescue us. Rather, by His death/resurrection, Jesus met the holy demands of God’s Law; in effect paying God!
- D. **He has forgiven us** (1:14b).
  - 1. The word translated *forgiveness* means “to send away” or “to cancel a debt.” X has not only set us free and transferred us to a new kingdom, but He has canceled every debt so that we cannot be enslaved again. Satan cannot find anything that will indict us!
  - 2. John writes that we have been loosed (released) from our sins (Rev. 1:5).  
*To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood,*

## II. CHRIST IS THE CREATOR (Col. 1:15-17).

The false teachers were very confused about creation. They taught that matter was evil, including the human body. They also taught that JC did not have a real body since this would have put Him in contact with evil matter. The results of these false teachings were tragic, including extreme asceticism on the one hand and unbridled sin on the other. If your body is sinful, you either try to enslave it, or you enjoy it.

- A. **He existed before creation** (1:15).
  - 1. *Firstborn* simply means “of first importance, of first rank.”
  - 2. *Firstborn of all creation* means preeminent to all creation. Jesus stands above and in glory to all that has been created.
  - 3. Paul used the word *image* to make this fact clear. It means “an exact representation and revelation” (Heb. 1:3; Jn. 14:9; 1:18).  
*(Heb 1:3) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature,*  
*(Jn 14:9) He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?*  
*(Jn 1:18) No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

- C. **He created all things** (1:16a).
  - 1. Since X created all things, He Himself is uncreated.
  - 2. It is no wonder that the winds and waves obeyed Him, and disease and death fled from Him, for He is Master over all (Jn. 1:3).  
*All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*
- D. **All things exist for Him** (1:16b).
  - 1. I like the three words Paul uses in the verse concerning X and the creation. Everything exists *in* Him, *for* Him, and *through* Him! (See NAS alternate readings, McCord's).
  - 2. JC is the Sphere in which they exist, the Agent through which they came into being, and the One for whom they were made.
  - 3. Greek philosophy taught:
    - a. A primary cause (plan). \
    - b. An instrumental cause (power). \ -- Jesus answers all three.
    - c. A final cause (purpose). /
- E. **He holds all things together** (1:17).
  - 1. "He is before all things," He can hold all things together. This affirms that JC is God.
  - 2. Only God exists before all of creation, and only God can make creation cohere.

### III. **CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH (Col. 1:18).**

- A. Each Xian is a member of this spiritual body, and JC is the Head. In the Greek, *head* meant "source, origin" as well as "leader, ruler." Jesus is the beginning or originator of the church and serves as its head or ruling authority.
- B. Paul said in Eph. 1:22-23 that Jesus is head over "all things to the church." No matter what the church is to be doing on earth, Jesus has the final say and is to rule over it.
- C. Jesus is to have the "first place" in everything!

### IV. **CHRIST IS THE BELOVED OF THE FATHER (Col. 1:19-20).**

- B. Paul takes a giant step forward in his argument, for he declared that "all fullness" dwelt in JC! The word translated "fullness" was a technical term in the vocabulary of the Gnostic false teachers. It meant "the sum total of all the divine power and attributes."
- C. For this to  *dwell*  in Him, meant that it is "to be at home permanently."

### **CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. The message of the book of Colossians is as timely as our newspapers.
- B. The power of X is just as fresh today as it was in the first century.
- C. X is the preeminent One, give your life to Him!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.