

Jesus at the Center  
A Study in Colossians  
“Jesus at the Center of our Theology”

**Introduction:** Pick back up with this powerful and challenging book of Colossians today:

Review:

City of Colossae: Once prominent but by the 1<sup>st</sup> century a smaller and less-significant community (Turkey)

Church at Colossae: Founded by Pauline convert, Epaphras

Letter to the church at Colossae: News of emerging heresy in the church caused Paul to write this letter

Colossian Heresy: Merkabah Mysticism—Jewish twisted philosophy that while accepting the work of the cross, added legalism, law-keeping, asceticism, revelation knowledge, angel worship/mediators, and mystical experience

Colossian Application: Work of Christ still being diminished and denigrated by modern heresies of works gospel, super-spirituality, pluralism, preoccupation with the supernatural Hebraism

Remedy then and now? Strong dose of Christology

Begins with Jesus at the Center of our Confession

— In Christ Alone we Meet the Father’s Qualification

*Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Colossians 1:12 NKJV*

— In Christ Alone our Spiritual Citizenship is Changed

*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Colossians 1:13 NKJV*

NOTE: Delivered—“methistemi” (Ancient world victor kingdom transferred its captives to own kingdom)-Assyria/Babylon

NOTE: This transference is 4-fold

- A. From darkness to light—(groping, stumbling, unable to find way)
- B. From slavery to freedom
- C. From condemnation to forgiveness (Romans 8:1)
- D. From power of Satan to power of God

— In Christ alone our redemption was secured.

*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:14 NKJV*

- A. Only in Christ is this experienced
- B. Redemption (apolutrosis) to purchase in the marketplace—to buy back something once in your possession. To release with a ransom
- C. Price was His blood

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Ephesians 1:7 NKJV*

- D. It came no other way but through His blood

*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV*

Today—Jesus at the Center of our Theology

Setting Context

- Religious pluralism and toleration is interpreted to mean “one religion is as good as another.”
- Some take best from many religions and try to manufacture their own.
- To many, Jesus Christ is one of several great religious teachers, with no more authority than them.
- Prominence has replaced preeminence
- Age of syncretism that seeks lowest common denominator in theology mixed with a perverted notion of “love.”
- Even in evangelical churches, the doctrine of Christ is being distorted

Jesus at the Center of our Theology

Five Great Theological Affirmations (NOTE: Using biblical terms because we need to learn to think/speak correctly about such things).

## I. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ

*For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell. Colossians 1:19-20 NKJV*

*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Colossians 2:9 NKJV*

### A. What is the fullness of the Godhead?

#### 1. Godhead (some places—"deity")

- a. "theotes" (the-a'-tace)
- b. Only here in the New Testament
- c. State of being God

NOTE: Not divinity—that is an attribute of God. Deity is the essence of God.

- d. Jesus was not just divine—having a god-like attribute—HE WAS DEITY—WAS God (John 1:1—WORD WAS GOD!)
- e. Even we, in a sense have some divinity—we possess some attributes that God does
- f. Jesus alone possesses the unique nature of God

#### 2. Fullness (pleroma)—play' ra-ma

- a. In the sense of a ship being filled up
- b. Gnostics in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century taught that "pleroma" was the totality of aeons (divine emanations between them and God. Probably beginning in Colossae)
  - Had to pass through these emanates to get to supreme God
  - Could go to different levels-treated eons with respect
  - Angel worship on their way
  - Christ was only a supreme emanation

### B. That theology all dismantled in one word

*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Colossians 2:9 NKJV*

### C. He is the ONE—All-sufficient intermediary

### D. Why important today?

1. No earthly priest needed
2. No mediator needed

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3. No special unique works or holiness needed
4. One mediator

*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV*

All of the unique essence of God dwells in Christ—HE IS GOD!

## II. Christ is eternally existent.

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. Colossians 1:15 NKJV*

### IMPORTANT HERE:

#### Mormons:

Joseph Smith—all things have fathers, even God. If God was the father of Jesus then must have had a father too. God was like us once, so that we can be like Him. Brigham Young taught that Adam was the father of all spiritual beings including Jesus/Satan. (Yet being accepted into mainstream evangelism)

Jehovah's Witness—"a god"

Muslims—Great teacher, birth planned by God

A. As the fullness of the Godhead (deity) dwells in Christ, He is then the perfect revelation of God

1. Invisible became visible in Jesus Christ
2. He declared or revealed God

*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:18 NKJV*

*Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? John 14:9 NKJV*

B. In creation humanity bore the image of God

1. That image marred and defaced by sin
2. Still the Imago Dei stamped in/on us
3. This image is a copy in humanity of the perfect image of God revealed in Christ

C. In creation, humanity bore the image of God but in the Incarnation, Jesus Christ took on humanity that He might display the perfect glory of the invisible God

D. First born over all creation

1. Not He was created
2. Privilege of primogeniture (right by law of firstborn to inherit the estate)
3. As Incarnated Christ and/will see later before all things and creator of all things—He is Firstborn in privilege

*"You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased." Revelation 4:11 NLT*

### **III. He is the originator and sustainer of ALL THINGS.**

*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Colossians 1:16-18 NKJV*

A. Before all things and heir of all things—v. 15

B. By Him all things were created (Genesis 1:1/John 1:1-3)

C. If He created all things—then all are subject to Him

1. Colossian heresy—emanations aeons
2. Mohammed is subject to Him
3. Angels—including Satan—all subject to Christ

D. In Him all things exist (17)

1. They all hold together because of Him
2. Hebrews writer (upholds all things)

E. What a comfort for us!

1. Universe
2. Stars
3. Heavens
4. Humanity—all held together by Him

#### **IV. He is the firstborn from the dead.**

*And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. Colossians 1:18 NKJV*

- A. He is the Head of the Body (uniquely Paul)
  - 1. Providing life
  - 2. Exclusive control
  - 3. Directs its purpose
  
- B. But the Risen Christ who is the Head of the Church
  - 1. Triumphant over all forces even death
  - 2. He will build His church—it will not fail
  - 3. Because he arose—so will we!

#### **V. Christ is the maker of peace.**

*And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight. Colossians 1:20-22 NKJV*

- A. Reconciled all things—all powers
- B. He reconciles us to God—through the cross
- C. Breaks down barrier that separates us from God
- D. Once far away—now made near
- E. In His flesh (22)—Incarnation must be accepted

— Gnostics—1 John/2 John

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 1 John 4:1-2 NKJV*

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 2 John 7 NKJV*

— Romans 8:3

*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.*  
*Romans 8:3 NKJV*

F. If you continue in the faith—theology is important!

**Conclusion:** Jesus at the Center of our Theology

- All the fullness of God dwells in Him
- Eternally existent
- Creator/Sustainer of all things—you!
- Firstborn from the dead
- Maker of Peace

No other way—Jesus at the Center!