TALKING POINTS

Uniting Heaven and Earth:
Christ in Philippians & Colossians
Q1L8: "The Preeminence of Christ"

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MEMORY VERSE: "He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."
Colossians 1:15-17, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

Resuming our study of Colossians, this week's lesson considers why Christ holds such pre-eminence in the plan of redemption.

1. Jesus is the invisible God made visible (Sun, Mon)

- Paul describes Jesus as "the image of the *invisible* God" (Col. 1:15). His point is that in Jesus, we finally *see* what God is like.
    - Jesus is uniquely able to reveal the Father because He has seen the Father (Jn. 1:18), pre-existed with the Father (Jn. 17:5), and is one with the Father (Jn. 10:30).
        - "[Jesus] is God's thought made audible and God's character made visible." Qtly, Sun, par 2

> He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent…. He is the eternal, self-existent Son. Ev 615 (Qtly, Fri, last par)

- Jesus is not only a manifestation of the eternally pre-existent God, but is also fully God Himself.
    - He is "the firstborn over all creation" (Col. 1:15). Paul explains what he means by following with "for by Him all things were created" (v. 16).
        - See Qtly, Mon, par 1
    - He is "before all things" (v. 17).
        - "The Greek expression can mean precedence in rank as well as in time, but in every other instance in Paul's writings, it refers to time." Qtly, Mon, par 4
        - Jesus is the "uncaused cause" or the "unmoved mover."

2. Jesus is the beginning of a new humanity (Tue, Wed)

- "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the *beginning*…" (Col. 1:18).

- "Here, 'beginning' [from the Greek word *archē*] refers to Jesus as the source and initiator of the church." Qtly, Wed, par 2
    - Paul uses a similar word, archēgos, to describe the role of Christ as "**Captain** of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10), and the "**Author**" of our faith (Heb. 12:2). This word signifies the head of a tribe or family (Num. 13:2, 3, septuagint).

- "The *firstborn* from the dead…" (v. 18; 1 Cor. 15:20; Rom. 6:4-8)
    - "His is the preeminent resurrection, even though not the first…. Without Christ's resurrection, no one else could be raised from the dead." Qtly, Wed, par 2

> For the first time Christ was about to give life to the dead. As the Prince of life and the shining ones approached the grave, Satan was alarmed for his supremacy…. The Saviour entered into no dispute with His adversary, but He then and there began His work of breaking the power of the fallen foe, and bringing the dead to life…. The resurrection was forever made certain. PP 478.4

> Jesus lives, and because He lives, we shall live also. DA 794.6

    - "Jesus is head of humanity and of the church, not only because of the Incarnation,… He is also – through His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 6:3, 4) – the initiator of a new creation." Qtly, Wed, par 2, 3

- Thus Christ is represented as the head of a new human race, through Whom we receive new life through the "new birth" (Jn. 1:13; 1 Jn. 3:9; Ac. 17:28; Jn. 15:1-8; Gal. 2:20).

3. All things are reconciled to God through Christ (Thu)

- Through Christ, God the Father reconciles all things to Himself (see vs. 19, 20; 2 Cor. 5:19).
    - Christ is the only medium of reconciliation. The revelation of God's character, which draws all to Him, was not complete until the sacrifice on the cross (Col. 1:20). Furthermore, in Christ's humanity heaven and earth are again united, and through the cross the enmity between God and man is destroyed (vs. 21, 22; Eph. 2:13-16).

CONCLUSION

> The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish, every earthly and hellish power…. It is the great center of attraction, for on it Christ gave up his life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection; yea, more. It was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror…. [Jn. 12:31 quoted]. If the cross does not find an influence in its favor, it creates an influence. Through generation succeeding generation, the truth for this time is revealed as present truth. Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world. 7ABC 457.4, 5