

Colossians 1: Christ Is Supreme

A Study in the Sufficiency of Jesus Christ

Introduction: The Riches of Christ

Colossians is a powerful letter written by the Apostle Paul while he was imprisoned. He writes to a church that is facing a serious threat: a seductive mix of philosophy, Jewish ritualism, and mysticism that elevates human rules or spiritual beings above Christ.

Paul's simple, direct answer to this complicated heresy is the overwhelming, life-changing truth: Christ is Supreme. He is all we need. If Christ is fully God and sovereign over creation and the Church, we are complete in Him.

This lesson explores Colossians 1, focusing on Paul's majestic portrait of Jesus Christ.

Study at a Glance: The 5 W's

KEY AREA	SUMMARY
WHO (Author & Audience)	
WHAT (Core Message)	
WHEN (Timing)	
WHERE (Location)	
WHY (Rationale)	

Key Terms Defined

TERM	DEFINITION (Contextual)
Supreme	
Preeminence	
Incarnation	
Syncretistic	
Heresy	
Mysticism	
Dispensation	
Hagios (Greek)	
Teleion (Greek)	

SECTION 1: Christ, Creator and Sustainer of All Things

(Read Colossians 1:12-17)

Paul establishes Christ's preeminence over *everything* that exists, setting the theological foundation for the rest of the letter. He is the original source, the agent of creation, and the power that holds the universe together.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text/Exegesis:** What does the phrase "the firstborn over all creation" (v. 15) mean in the context of v. 16 ("for by him all things were created")? Does this mean Christ was created, or something else?
2. **Application:** Paul says Christ is the one who holds *everything* together (v. 17). As you face major life transitions (caregiver, college debt, career change), how does knowing Christ is the ultimate **Sustainer** bring stability and prevent anxiety about the future?

SECTION 2: Christ, Head of the Church and Reconciler

(Read Colossians 1:18-23)

If Christ is supreme over creation, He is certainly supreme over the new creation: the Church. This section highlights Jesus's role as the reconciler, the source of new life, and the Head of His body.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text/Exegesis:** Paul says that through Christ, God was pleased to "reconcile to himself all things" (v. 20). What does "reconcile" mean, and what was the *original problem* that needed fixing between God and creation?
2. **Application:** You used to be "hostile in mind" toward God, but now you're "blameless" because of Christ. In your professional or social life, does your motivation come from a need to **perform** (to earn approval or recognition) or from **gratitude** (because Christ *already* gave you acceptance)? Explain the practical difference.

SECTION 3: Christ, Our Hope of Glory

(Read Colossians 1:24-29)

Paul concludes the chapter by discussing his own ministry, explaining that his suffering and labor are all centered on revealing one great, profound truth: the "mystery" revealed to all people.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text/Exegesis:** When Paul talks about "filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (v. 24), he's talking about Gospel *advancement* (not *atonement*). What is the difference between Christ's *redemptive* suffering (on the cross) and the *proclamatory* suffering Paul endures?
2. **Text/Exegesis:** What is the "glorious mystery" that has now been revealed, according to verse 27? Why is it described as "glorious" and what is the final result of this mystery?
3. **Application:** Paul's ultimate goal is to "present everyone mature in Christ" (v. 28). Maturity requires consistency and self-control. What is one area of your life (e.g., managing finances, navigating dating relationships, prioritizing community over isolation) that you need to intentionally surrender to Christ for greater maturity this week?

Conclusion: The Sufficiency of Christ

Colossians Chapter 1 stands as a magnificent declaration of who Jesus is, dismantling any philosophy or religious system that attempts to diminish Him.

Paul shows us two monumental truths:

1. **Christ is Supreme over Creation (Verses 15-17):** He is God, the reason everything exists, and the power that holds everything together. He has authority over all things seen and unseen.
2. **Christ is Supreme over Redemption (Verses 18-23):** He is the Head of the Church, the first to conquer death, and the sole agent of reconciliation. There is nothing to add to His completed work.

The result of His double supremacy is that we are **fully qualified** (v. 12), **fully redeemed** (v. 14), and hold the ultimate mystery of the universe: **Christ in us, the hope of glory** (v. 27). This is why Paul suffered and labored—to proclaim that we are complete in Christ.

Takeaway: If the all-sufficient Christ dwells within you, there is no room left for fear, pride, or doubt in the security of your salvation.