

Christ is All and in All

“Christ is all and in all.” Colossians 3:11

The overriding theme of the New Testament is Jesus Christ. This is particularly true of the apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians, which reveals Christ more than any other letter in the New Testament. Paul wrote this short letter around A.D. 62 from his imprisonment in Rome to the Christian community of house churches in Colossae, a city in what is now western Turkey. In his letter, Paul unfolds the gospel to the “saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossae” to help them see the majesty and power of the Son of God. In just the first chapter of Colossians alone, Paul speaks of Christ thirty times.

Paul starts his letter by stating that God’s kingdom is “the kingdom of the beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).” Paul follows this by declaring that Jesus Christ is eternal God. “He is the image of the invisible God... for in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form... He is before all things and in Him all things hold together (Colossians 1:15, 17; 2:9).” Paul then reveals Christ as the Creator. “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). Paul reveals Christ as the Redeemer. “For the Father was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, whether things on earth or things in heaven (Colossians 1:19-20).”

Paul proclaims that Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth. “He is the head over all rule and authority (Colossians 2:10).” Paul declares Christ’s headship and authority in the church. “He is also head of the body, the church... so that in everything He might have the supremacy (Colossians 1:18).” Paul also reveals Jesus Christ’s preeminent role in the new creation, which is His church, the body of Christ. “He is the beginning,

the first born from the dead... He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach (Colossians 1:18; 22).” Paul tells them the Old Covenant feasts and the Sabbath are a “mere shadow of the things that were to come – the reality is found in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).” Paul declares that Christ, by His death on the cross, conquered Satan and his forces of darkness. “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15).” Paul reveals that Christ is the mystery of God “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3).” Paul tells the Colossians that Christ, who is the fullness of God and Creator, Redeemer and Sovereign Lord, now lives in them. Paul declares the mystery of God is “Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).”

Yet Paul does not leave the Colossians with only doctrine about Christ. Paul wants them to know Christ and be complete in Christ. “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28).” Paul exhorts them, “As you have received Christ as Lord, so live in Him (Colossians 2:6-7).” How did they first receive Christ? By faith! Then how do they live in Christ? By faith! Paul warns them that man-made religion with its rules and regulations has no power to stop them from sinning (Colossians 2:20-23).” Paul proclaims the only way they can experience Christ’s life is to stay connected to Christ their head (Colossians 2:19). He reminds them this is entirely possible if they know (believe and act) on the truth that they have died with Christ. “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ (Colossians 3:3).”

Paul uses the picture of circumcision to teach the Colossians that Christ removed their sinful nature from them when they were saved. “In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the *removal of the sinful nature*, by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians

2:11).” Paul then shifts in the very next verse (Colossians 2:12) from the Old Covenant seal of righteousness (circumcision) to the New Covenant seal of righteousness (baptism) in order to further show that their old sinful nature was removed from them when they were born again. Paul explains that since their old sinful nature died and was removed (verse 2:11), it was then disposed of by burial: “Having been *buried with Him in baptism* and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead (verse 2:12).” By linking Old Covenant circumcision with New Covenant baptism, Paul leaves no doubt that the death and removal of the sinful nature, as symbolized by circumcision, is also portrayed by the burial stage of water baptism. Paul’s point is that baptism confirms (just as circumcision did) that our old sinful nature not only died but was also removed from us through Christ’s death on the cross. Having established this truth, Paul exhorts the Colossians to “put to death” the carnal attitudes and actions of their unconverted soul-life (Colossians 3:5) since they “have put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of their Creator – a renewal in which... Christ is all and in all (Colossians 3:10-11).”

Jesus Christ is the alpha and omega – the beginning and the end. Christ is the head and we are His body. Christ is the fullness of God and we have been given fullness in Him. God’s desire is for Christ to be *all* sovereign in *all* His body. This is the goal of the gospel and God’s eternal purpose. If we believe and act on the divine truth that God has exchanged our sinful nature with His Son’s nature, then Christ will be all and in all.

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, set your hearts on the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:1-4