

THE APOSTLE'S CREATOR

Colossians 1:15-17

Reader: Tony Morrell - Genesis 1

Intro: In every epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote his emphasis was always on Christ. And his letter to the church at Colosse was no exception. His passion was to know Christ. His passion was to preach Christ. You can see from the very frequent references that he made to Christ, that Christ was His life. He said this in Colossians 3:4. But it was not just for himself that he was so devoted to Christ, but it was for every believer in every church wherever that church might be. If you were to ask Paul what was the main difference in his life before he became a Christian, and after, he would have said without any hesitation, it was Christ! And if you were to ask him what his purpose was in preaching Christ, he probably would have answered in the words found in the last five verses of chapter 1 right here in Colossians. (Read Col. 1:25-29.)

If you remove from this epistle the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and all pronouns that refer to him, you wouldn't have anything left. Paul's message was of Christ.

Now God felt the same way about Christ that Paul did, only even more so. For example look at Colossians 1:19. (Read.) And earlier in the chapter than that, after Paul had spoken about the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the revelation of God, and then about the Lord Jesus Christ in creation, and finally about the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, Paul concluded that part by saying at the end of verse 18, "that in all things He," that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, "might have the preeminence"! To "have the preeminence" means, *that He might be first*.

Now none of this is to minimize the importance of the Father, or of the Holy Spirit, but it is to see the exalted place that our Lord Jesus Christ has in all of these areas: in the Gospel, as the revelation of God, in creation, and in the Church, which is the body of Christ.

Today we come to His preeminence in creation. The Bible places a very strong emphasis on the fact that the universe in which we live was all created by God. In fact, the Bible begins that way: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Apostle John began by calling Jesus Christ by one of His Names. He is the Word. And John said, "In

the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” But then He added in verse 3, “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

And then when we come to Colossians 1 we read about Christ in verse 16, “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers.” And then notice the last part of this verse: “All things were created by Him, and for Him.”

Now all that you have heard read this morning, and all of these other verses that I have referred to from the Bible, are denied by most of our leading educators today. In fact, I have heard from more than one college professor that his purpose was to destroy the faith of any student who comes to college or university who still believes in God. Godless educators have done quite a thorough job of getting the Bible out of our public schools. They have done away with prayer (or tried to). And yet right at the beginning of His Word, God led Moses to write that “in the beginning” there was a God, that He created heaven and earth and everything in them. And He did it in six days. And if you will read through the Bible with an open heart, you will have no doubt in your mind before you get to the end that God did it, and He did it in six days just by speaking the Word.

You see the reason people resort to a ridiculous theory like evolution for the origin of the universe is because they don't know God. God is really God. He is the one true God, existing eternally in Three Persons. Over and over again in the prophecy of Isaiah the Lord told His people, “I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:5-6). One reason that people flock to an idea like evolution is because they don't want to believe that they are responsible to a God. They want to be able to do whatever they want to do and not be responsible to anyone. Paul said that “all things were created by Him,” that is, by Christ, “and for HIM.” And I will tell you this morning that the reason we are going through hard times in our world today, and the reason that they are probably going to get worse, is for this very reason. The Lord is letting us reap the harvest of our God-less ways.

Let me point out something else from the divine account of creation. During the first five days of creation God was getting ready for His creation of man. And what does Genesis 1 tell us about the creation of a human being. It says, “Male and female created He them” (Gen. 1:27).

And do you remember what was the first thing that God told them to do? He said, “Be fruitful, and multiply.” You can’t expect two men to do that. Or two women. The family is made up of a man and a woman who have children. God has ordained it that way. But when we make the mistake of trying to get rid of God, and getting rid of the Bible, all we do is make mistakes which the Bible calls sin. So what is the Lord doing today? He is doing lots of things, but one thing He is doing is letting us have a taste of what life is like when we rule Him out of our lives as a nation. People want to do whatever they want to do, but God has never put up with that over the long haul, and He is not going to put up with sin today. We can learn all we need to know about our roots if we read the Bible, and we can see from history that God is not only the Creator, but we are all responsible to Him for what we do. He is the Judge of all the earth, and people are going to stand before Him some day whether they think they are, or not. That’s a choice we don’t have. For those of us whose sins have been forgiven, standing before God will be the greatest joy we have ever had. But for those who do not know the Lord, they will call for the rocks and mountains to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

The foundation of all Scripture is Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Don’t ever let anyone, even if he or she has a Ph. D. after his or her name, try to convince you of anything else. Evolution is a lie. And so is theistic evolution – that God created the heaven and the earth by a process of evolution. All He had to do was to speak the Word. I believe that He could have done it all on one day, if that had been His will. But He did it on six days. If you ask me why I believe it was six twenty-four hour days, my answer would be found in Exodus 20 where we have the first giving of the Law. Concerning the Fourth Commandment we read that the Lord said to Moses,

8 Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.

And then when you skip down to verse 11 you read this:

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

So if the sabbath day is a twenty-four day, then the six days of creation were also twenty-four hour days.

But now let me get back to my text in Colossians 1, verses 15 through 17.

Last week in dealing with verse 15, the first part of which deals with the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, but is followed by this statement about our Lord as “the firstborn of every creature. So it really belongs to verses 16 and 17 where Paul was dealing with our Lord as the Creator and His creation. In the past, and probably even in the present, there are those who say that this means that Christ was the first of God created beings. But the first part of verse 16 rules out that explanation because Paul went on to say, “For by Him were all things created.” So our Lord is the Creator, not a created being. He is eternal as the Father is eternal and as the Holy Spirit is eternal. They are without beginning and without ending. What, then, does it mean that Christ is “the firstborn of every creature”?

In Psalm 89 the Lord was speaking of King David and his place (along with his descendants including His greatest descendant in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ), that “I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Psa. 89:27). We know from the history of Israel in the OT that the firstborn son was the son of the greatest importance in the family. He was the chief heir, and the main one through whom the family was continued.

Now through David the Lord was carrying on the Messianic hope. Christ we know will some day be acknowledged as “the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.” So for our Lord to be called “the firstborn of every creature” means, in the words of John Calvin, “that He,” our Lord, “might the substance and foundation of all things” (Vol. XXI, p. 150). Our Lord is the Heir of all things, and He is the foundation upon which the hopes of all creation rest. In a way it is related to Paul’s statement at the end of verse 17, “and by Him all things consist.” But we will get to that in a few minutes.

In verse 16 we have the whole scope of creation, created beings “in heaven, and that are on earth.” In Genesis 1:1 “the heaven” seems to refer primarily to the bodies such as the sun, moon, and stars, but here with the following words, “visible and invisible,” it would seem to include angels. We realize that when Satan appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, that sin and rebellion against God had already taken place before Adam and Eve sinned. We learned from verse 15 that God is invisible, and here in verse 16 we learn that He also has some creatures who are invisible to us. The Devil is a fallen angel, and many joined with him in his rebellion against God. They are fallen angels, the demons, They in

getting Adam to sin, have affected the nations on earth as well as individual human beings. “Thrones” and “dominions” can refer to governments, “principalities and powers” usually refer to the organization, perhaps something like a hierarchy among angels. Paul in writing his epistle to the Ephesians in speaking of the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged, said,

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12).

We know that the Lord has divided the world into nations with different languages. Likewise, the angelic beings have their own organized powers. They were not created evil any more than man was created evil. But untold numbers became evil, and retaining whatever organization they had before, that organization continues and is exercised against us on earth either to restrain man from hearing the Gospel, or defeating those of us who know the Lord. Paul gave us some truth about the Devil and his angelic demons when he wrote this to the Corinthian church:

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6).

Notice in verse 6 that our salvation is likened to God’s work in creation. And this is probably what Paul also said in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (a new creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Man was originally created by God from the dust of the earth. Sin destroyed that relationship with God, and so what is needed now is a new creation which comes about through the Gospel.

God created a well ordered and perfect creation in our universe, but also in the unseen dwelling place of God and angels. And it is that perfect creation that Paul describes in verse 16. And he ends the verse by saying, “All things were created by Him, and for Him.” So all creation was originally created in perfect condition. But God created it for Himself.

We can see today what the Devil and his demons are up to. And at the present time they are being apparently very successful. Man generally are seeking to drive God out of His creation. Man acts like he is God. He doesn't need to pray because he feels very self-sufficient. He doesn't want the Bible because he is not concerned about what God wants him to do; he wants to do what he wants to do. Man thinks that he is free, but the truth is that he is a slave, a slave to the sin which abides in his own heart. But let me tell you something. God is not going to be outdone by man. The kingdoms of this world are going to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. God created all things for Himself, and He is going to take all things for Himself. And woe to those who are not on His side when that day comes. It will not come all at once, but it is coming, and it will be complete.

And now just a few words about verse 17. Paul was still speaking of Christ. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.:

What does "before" mean? "He is before all things." He existed before creation. He is infinitely greater than what He has created. All of the nations of the world in any generation are to God like a drop in a bucket. That doesn't amount to much, does it? He is the Creator; "all things" else are His creation. In the end God is going to win.

"And by Him all things consist." God created all things, and it is only "by Him" that everything is held together. If the Members of the Godhead were to take their hold off of the world for a second, there wouldn't be a part of this universe that would survive. And yet stupid people believe it all is due to Mother Nature. When you read the Bible you can really see why the person who says there is no God, is a fool.

Concl: Let me ask you as I close: What do verses like these we have looked at this morning, do to you? I'll tell you what they do to me. They make me want to get down on my knees to worship our Lord Jesus Christ, and ask Him to forgive me for not realizing what a perfect Creator He is, how sovereign He is in every detail of my life, and open my heart to Him to show me more of His love, His mercy, His power, and His infinite wisdom. We need these truths in these days in which we live. God knows what is going on. He alone is sufficient for us. He is all we need. Let's keep our hearts stayed on Him. He has promised us perfect peace if we do.