

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:18-20 ESV

As we continue looking at Paul's discourse on the supremacy of Jesus Christ, we find an amazingly rich passage of scripture. We first see that Jesus is the ***head of the body, the church***. Paul referred to Christ several other times as being the head of the collective Church, such as in Ephesians 1:22 and 5:23. This is a very important doctrinal understanding of Christ's position of authority over believers, because no human is in command of God's people.

Pastors and elders have a defined leadership role in guiding and caring for God's flock, but they too are servants, and only Christ is and forever will be the final rule and power that believers must follow. What He says goes, period. Knowing this helps us avoid being led astray by false teachers or so-called prophets who claim to speak new revelations from God or have some special place of authority over His church.

Paul also reaffirmed that Christ is ***the firstborn from the dead***. After Jesus died on the cross, the Father raised Him from the grave and glorified Him (see Mark 16:19, Eph 1:20). Christ is the first who wore human flesh to have experienced this resurrection and glorification, which is why Paul said, ***"that in everything he might be preeminent"*** – or another way to put it, *be in first place*. Just as He is the firstborn of creation (Col. 1:15), He is the firstborn from the dead. And we too will one day experience this resurrection and glorification – and what an amazing promise and hope to look forward to!

We then read that ***in him [Christ] all the fullness of God [the Father] was pleased to dwell***. This is a very profound statement and is impossible to fully unpack here, but there is a critically important takeaway: We must never deny that Christ is God.

Remember, Christ is not God the Father, but He is God the Son, and through His perfect obedience the Father was ***pleased*** to have His Spirit fully dwell in the Son. This demonstrates the perfect unity of the Father and Son, as we see when Jesus stated in John 10:33: ***"I and the Father are one,"*** and in John 14:10 when He said, ***"Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works."***

And again we see this affirmed by the writer of Hebrews when he wrote, ***"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,"*** (Heb 1:3a).

For all intents and purposes, when we see Jesus, we see the Father (John 14:9), and every word that the Son speaks and every deed the Son does is in the will of and with the authority and power of the Father (see Matt 28:18, John 10:18, John 17:2, etc). By this we are shown the

deity of Christ, and to make Him any less, like just a good teacher or prophet, is to reject scripture and ultimately to blaspheme God's Holy Spirit.

Paul closes this paragraph with, ***“and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”*** Now, because of the similar pronouns this is a bit of a tricky verse, but here's how I read it:

and through him [Christ] to reconcile to himself [the Father] all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his [Christ's] cross.

I believe this makes the most sense, especially when we consider what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2, specifically in verse 16, ***“and [Christ] might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”*** When Christ died on the cross in obedience to His Father, he fulfilled the required sacrifice for sins once and for all (see Hebrews 9:26 and Romans 6:10). By this act, he reconciled us – or stated another way, *“brought us back a former state of harmony”* – to the Father. This final and eternally enduring sacrifice brings us ***peace by the blood of his cross.***

God's law requiring a blood sacrifice for sins was completed and made whole through Jesus bearing every one of our sins in His body. We must also remember this includes the wrath of the Father that Jesus suffered, so it was even more than just the torture the Romans inflicted. When Jesus cried out, ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** (Matt 27:46) He was experiencing the wrath and separation from His Father. I don't think we can even begin to comprehend what that was like for our Lord, but we should meditate on it as it will give us a greater appreciation for what the cross really means.

We may be tempted sometimes to minimize what Jesus went through to save us, but I hope this serves as a powerful reminder that His sacrifice was heaven-shaking. Let's try never to take Christ's work for granted and instead strive to live every day with an attitude of thanksgiving, praise, adoration, and worship of Jesus Christ, our Lord, for what He endured for us to be reconciled to the Father.

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