

## COLOSSIANS 1:15-20 | A DOXOLOGY TO JESUS CHRIST

## VERSE 15 – BLUE

Paul begins a doxology of Jesus, celebrating Him as the **image of the invisible God**. The word **image** is εἰκὼν [eikon] from which we get icon.

As the image, there are two things we can note in the negative:

- Jesus is not **the invisible God** (for He is visible). Similarly, Hebrews 1:2 calls Him "the brightness of His glory." That is, there is a difference between the Father and the Son.
- Jesus as **the image** is far different than "the shadow." In Hebrews 10:1, the Law was a **shadow** and not an image.

If Jesus is **the image of the invisible God**, what about man who is created in His image. Comparing Genesis 1:26, it appears that mankind in general is *in the image and the likeness* of God, but Jesus *is the image* of God.

Paul also celebrates the Lord's preeminence over all creation. As the **firstborn of every creature** He has dominion over all creation.

## VERSE 16 – BLUE

This simple verse encompasses all things under Christ as the creator of all things. Since **all things were created by him, and for him** then it only makes sense that all of creation should honor and glorify Him. This clearly does not happen today since the earth is under a curse and since mankind lives in rebellion against Christ. Furthermore, since **all things created** are not in harmony with Him, we must expect a coming day in which there will be the **restitution of all things** (Acts 3:21). However, this does not demand that Jesus Christ must **gather together in one all things today** or even *in our lifetime*. Jesus will act when the Father gives the word (Ps. 110:1).

## VERSE 17 – BLUE

The word **before** is used in the sense of superiority (as the same word is used in James 5:12).

In Christ, **all things consist**. The Greek συνίστημι [*sunhistemi*] is *sun* (together) and *histemi* (stand). The English **consist** comes from the Latin *consistere*, which is *con* (with) and *sistere* (stand). Thus the English comes from the Latin which comes from the Greek. In Him all things "stand together" or "hold together."

The Christian view of our physical world should be that *mankind could not destroy it if he tried*. Christ is the one who holds all things together. We can destroy productivity of the earth for a time, or make a portion of it useless for human good, but it would be impossible for us to *undo* what Christ holds together.

For a few examples of how worldly thinking contradicts with this thought, consider:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/humanity-destroy-itself-before-sun-will-avi-loeb-2019-11>

<https://aligntoughts.com/heres-how-humans-are-destroying-the-earth/>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210520-could-humans-really-destroy-all-life-on-earth>

Since **all things consist** through Christ, we can rest assured that He will keep our planet together until all things come together in Him.

## VERSE 18 – BLUE

Paul praises Christ as **the head of the body, the church**. Only in Pauline epistles is the church known as the Body of Christ (because the Body of Christ is a wholly Pauline concept).

It is important to note that the Body of Christ is to be distinguished from the so-called “visible” church. The Body of Christ consists of all believers under the Pauline pattern of grace. The visible church is the local assembly. The Body comes under the headship of Christ and has no earthly organization, the local church assembles for worship, proclamation, and service. There is nothing in Scripture that says that various local churches should come together in union of ministry or mission. Each assembly can function fully and independently.

He is further described as **the beginning** and **the firstborn from the dead**, two characteristics added to the others to ensure that **in all things he might have the preeminence**.

#### VERSE 19 – BLUE

It was pleasing to God that **in him should all fulness dwell**. Colossians 2:9 elaborates, saying **in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**.

Any doctrine of God that does not include **the fulness of the Godhead** in Jesus Christ is in error. You can’t get more “God” than what you’ve got in Jesus Christ.

#### VERSE 20 – BLUE

The New Testament presents reconciliation as a complete and completed work of Christ by the Cross. On several occasions it is noted that **all things** have been reconciled. See 2 Cor 5:17 for an example. While some (especially within Calvinism) are reluctant to take **all things** to mean **all things** in v. 20, they must recognize that to reject the completeness of the term in v. 20 requires a rejection of a completeness of the exact term in vv. 16 and 17.

This view requires that we theologically separate reconciliation from salvation. Reconciliation is used of **things**, including inanimate things which cannot be saved. For humanity, Christ has provided the balance adjustment entry so that salvation is possible for those who would receive it, by grace through faith.

Reconciliation is accomplished **by Him** and only available through Him. Without Him, we never become recipients of this reconciliation.

The word **reconcile** is ἀποκαταλλάσσω [apokatalasso], which by etymology is “to totally make into another.” It speaks of the **restitution of all things** (Acts 3:21) and was accomplished **through the blood of his cross**.

### COLOSSIANS 1:21-23 | THE NEED OF MANKIND: TO BE BOTH RECONCILED AND IN THE FAITH

#### VERSE 21 – BLUE

Concerning the pronoun, **you**, see note on verse 9.

Not only were **things** reconciled (v. 20), but also **you**, further described as **sometime alienated and enemies**...have also been **reconciled**.

Once again, do not equate reconciliation with salvation. God is reconciling **all things** (v. 20). Note 2 Corinthians 5:19, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them**. To be reconciled is to be given a new position, and the position of reconciled man is that their sin is not counted against them (2 Cor. 5:19).

#### VERSE 22 – BLUE

This reconciliation was accomplished **in the body of his flesh through death**. Thus both the incarnation and the physical death of Jesus Christ is a necessary ingredient to any doctrine of reconciliation. If we leave out the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, we may have preached love, repentance, faith, hope, optimism, or any of a

list of self-help messages, but we have not preached the Gospel. Note that the memorial meal of the Lord's Supper is a reminder of these two key elements of reconciliation.

Reconciliation was **to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight**. This is the *reason* God reconciled us. Since it is said that God, in the death of Jesus, has reconciled **all things** (v. 20), it must be noted that all things have not received the outcome of the reason for the reconciliation. For a person, this only comes by individual acceptance of salvation by grace through faith. A person can be reconciled but (sadly) never presented **holy and unblameable and unproveable** before God.

#### VERSE 23 - BLUE

The *purpose* of the reconciliation happens when **ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away**. This does not imply that *if you do not continue you will not be saved*. Rather, *if you do not continue you will not achieve the purpose of your reconciliation*.

The **gospel, which ye have heard** is the Pauline Gospel, and it provides salvation free and clear to all who receive it. This salvation was made known worldwide (**to every creature which is under heaven**), and Paul is its **minister** (servant).