

## Colossians 1:15-23 Continue in your faith...

There are so many thoughts going through our mind every second of the day. Have you ever just tried to not think? Go! Hard isn't it? We have so many pre-conceived notions, responsibilities, and expectations that are constantly going on in our head. The way we think of them is mainly through images. When we think of something our brain brings up an image that we have seen so we can recall how we feel about that thing or situation.

When I say something tell me the first thing you see that comes to your mind – filter!  
Soda Sandwich Chicken Movie USF Beach Kim Kardashian Friend Charlie Sheen

When I say Jesus do you think of God?

The heresy viewed Christ as one of many lesser spirits that came from God. Their belief system also stated that spirit was good while matter was bad. It basically stated that God would not take on evil matter and come down to earth. They denied Jesus' humanity and deity through this. However, Paul refutes that through one of the most important sections of verses in the Bible when it comes to proving that Jesus is God and that Jesus is all we need because of the power and authority He has. As a result we are free from sin once we trust in Him through the power of His death and resurrection.

### Colossians 1:15-23

v. 15 – image (eikon)– a stamp that leaves an imprint. Jesus is the royal stamp/seal of God because He bears a specific likeness to God and His authority. This verse sets the stage for the rest of the passage with the two statements it makes: First, He is the image of the invisible God Second, He is the firstborn over all creation. Greek translated – Manifestation/a symbol that brought an actual presence of the object. A “visible express” - J.B. Phillips. Jesus brought God into the human sphere of understanding. He manifested God! This is similar to Heb 1:3 where it states “Jesus is the exact representation of God.” The ultimate point is that “in Christ the invisible God became visible.” In the OT images of God were forbidden. No one was to create a likeness of God and worship it. That would make a symbol. God would then be associated with that symbol forever. God is bigger than that, hence the law made to protect that image. What's interesting is that the OT also states that we are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). And in the LXX (Septuagint) the Greek word used for that was (eikon). So, Paul is saying that Jesus had the earthly image of Adam and the heavenly image of God, also stating that Jesus was God and man. By using the word image, Paul stressed that God was present wherever Jesus was. Can you imagine sitting and eating with Jesus knowing that was God sitting there with you?

v. 15, 18 – Firstborn – Taken from Paul's Jewish upbringing/background - a Hebrew way of saying someone was especially honored. Exodus 4:22 – The nation of Israel called firstborn and so was David (Psalm 89:27). This was not referring to physical birth but their place of honor before God. So basically Paul is saying that Jesus Christ has a place of honor OVER ALL CREATION. Therefore, He has priority over everything and preeminence.

v. 17 – All things hold together in Christ – Christ is the one who sustains the universe, physically and spiritually through the redemption of sinful people to God. Scientists tell us how precise everything is. For example, if the earth were just a tiny bit closer to the sun we would be burned

to death, if we were a tiny bit farther we would freeze to death or not even exist. If the properties of water were altered slightly, we couldn't survive. There is no accident to how everything works. Life is a gift from God that is held together through Christ. Today, your life is sustained by the grace, goodness and power of God. God stays involved with His creation. He doesn't let us go live and fend for ourselves.

– He is before all things – Christ existed before all things, which removes him from being created and He is eternal. (John 8:58, Rev 22:13)

v. 18 – Paul uses a human body to illustrate how Christ is the head of the church. Through Christ (the head) the body moves, acts, and takes direction. Without the head there is no life. (Eph 4:15, 5:23). Therefore, you make up the church. So what part of it are you?

– firstborn among the dead – Jesus proved He has supremacy over death by conquering it through coming back to life, into new life. Death infected humanity at the Garden of Eden because of sin (disobedience to God). So death is coming for anyone who bears the consequences of sin. But because Christ is supreme over death we can now overcome death and live forever in heaven with God.

v. 19 – fullness – Jesus wasn't just filled with God's Spirit. He was filled with the fullness of God, stating that He had the total essence of God's nature AND authority. *Fullness* was a popular term for the Gnostics. They used it to refer to the combination of all supernatural influences. Paul used their own word to elevate Christ above all other religious ideas and systems. The word fullness was used in conjunction with God making Himself known through a variety of forms. However, since Paul uses it here with Jesus, he is saying that God is found only through Jesus alone – John 14:6 says, I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except through me. Jesus is the only authority we have to get to God. Everything God is, Jesus is. However, God isn't just everything Jesus is because God is the Father, Spirit and Son. Jesus is only one aspect of God.

Here God took on flesh and not what others have said - that a human was elevated to deity. Literal translation – God was pleased to take human form in Jesus. Dwell is present tense stressing that it is ongoing not in the past.

v. 20 – Reconcile things on earth or in heaven – The spirit world (angels rebelling), human world (Adam and Eve's rebellion) and material world (affected by Adam and Eve's rebellion and human sin) equals natural disasters and difficulties. Nothing lies outside of Christ's reconciling work.

V. 15-20 – a hymn that has theological affirmations of Jesus but also it is reflective of worship in the early church. In fact many of our hymns and songs today are based on these lyrics. There are two sections. The first is Christ's relation to the created world and the second is Jesus' relationship to the redemption which he created. Paul loves to remind the believers of that time about Christ's redemptive purpose of reconciling us with a Holy and Perfect God.

v. 21 – Before becoming Christians, the Colossians were enemies of God because their mind/disposition was to do evil. Matt 7:16 – talks about “by their fruit you will recognize them” This means the mind produces the fruit of actions.

v. 22 – Holy in His sight – referred to a believer’s position with God, separate from sin and set apart by God’s righteousness. This is only done through Christ’s death and resurrection. Now followers of Christ are as holy as Jesus.

v. 22b – Expectations of the believer – holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. OT sacrifices – animal must be without blemish and holy.

v. 23 – When you are saved from your sins through belief and trust in Christ you will persevere in your faith. You will do this through hating sin, loving God, desiring to be obedient to His commands and being energized by the Holy Spirit that’s in you. (John 8:30-32)

1 Cor 15:20-28 – because of the resurrection, Jesus brings into reality the blessings of the new age. John McArthur said this in his Colossians study.

Because Jesus is God He is sufficient for everything we need. Rely on Jesus for anything because He died for you. As a result we are blameless before a holy and perfect God. So, continue in your faith knowing that you are sealed until the end once you trust in Christ. As Paul says, continue in your faith, trust in it, knowing that Jesus is God and because of that He can and will take care of you.