

Jesus Christ is Supreme

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I remember some years ago; I had to follow someone by vehicle to a location I had never been to. It was for a meeting and the person in the vehicle in front of me had been there before. The problem was it was in an area that had several traffic lights. So, I drove my vehicle up to about an inch from the other person's back bumper. I didn't want to get stuck at a traffic light. I thought if I drove close enough to the bumper, I could go through the light cycles without issues. The problem is you drive with your foot always on the brake because you're so close to the bumper, if they make a sudden stop, you'll have an issue. If the person you're following is far ahead of you and they go through a yellow light, you'll go through a red light. With my luck, there would be a police officer at the light. We do this because we're afraid of losing sight of the driver ahead of us who knows where they're going. If we lose sight of them, we're afraid of getting lost. So, following people is not always easy. Plus, we have to put our full trust into the person we are following. Most of the time, we like to have good information on the person we are following. Most parents like information on their children's coaches at school because kids follow their coaches' example. If the coach is a bad human being, the children may pick up some of the bad behavior from the coach or coaches. As we continue with the sermon series, following Jesus, we need to spend some time looking at who we are following.

Paul wrote a letter to the Colossian Church to address some issues. One, was false teaching that had seeped into the teaching of Jesus. The Greek philosophies of the day were being mixed into the teachings of Jesus. This would cause some problems because some would start to follow the person who made up the philosophies that were being taught. So, Paul wanted to make sure the Colossians knew who they were following and why they should be following Him alone.

So, let's turn to Colossians 1: 11 – 23 where we read this from Paul, “¹¹ We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all

the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy,^[a] ¹² always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴ who purchased our freedom^[b] and forgave our sins.

Christ Is Supreme

¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,^[c]

¹⁶ for through him God created everything
in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see

and the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him.

¹⁷ He existed before anything else,
and he holds all creation together.

¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church,
which is his body.

He is the beginning,

supreme over all who rise from the dead.^[d]

So he is first in everything.

¹⁹ For God in all his fullness
was pleased to live in Christ,

²⁰ and through him God reconciled
everything to himself.

He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth
by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. ²³ But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the

world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.
(www.biblegateway.com – NLT)

Here we have Paul starting to create a picture for the Colossian Church on who this Jesus is that they are to follow. We had talked a little last Sunday about how we are to follow Jesus. We pray for each other that we may have the power of the Holy Spirit within us that will give us strength, endurance, patience, and joy. Paul continues in verse 13 that they were rescued from the one (satan) who rules in the kingdom of darkness. God had purchased their freedom from this darkness from the blood which includes the forgiveness of sin. God did this by allowing His Son to die on the cross and because of this, Paul tells us that we are now brought into His Kingdom of His Dear Son. Paul is telling the Colossian Church and us that we are following someone who has been given authority by God Himself. Jesus shed His own blood for us by the authority of God. God has purchased our freedom with His Son's blood for us. We can narrow this down and say we follow someone who loves us so deeply that He died for you. As I look at this, we follow someone who loves us beyond measure. Most people only love to a certain point. If you start to think a different way or like something they don't like, they'll usually turn on you. Not Jesus. He went to the cross for everybody including people we think are horrible. It makes sense to follow someone who loves you beyond measure instead of following a human teaching or culture that could care less for you. Now, we have to keep in mind that when we follow Jesus, we are set apart. Paul knew that following Jesus means that one is set apart from the world. Paul was told this at his own calling by Jesus in Acts 26: 15 – 18, ““And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. ¹⁶ Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. ¹⁷ And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.’” (www.biblegateway.com) We are to be set apart because Jesus is totally different from anything else on this earth.

When you follow Jesus correctly, you will be set apart from the world. Paul starts to give better details of who Jesus is in verse 15 of Colossians where Paul tells us that Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. When Jesus walked this earth, He was the visible image of the invisible God. When we follow Jesus, we

are following God. Jesus is the exact representation of God. Not only that, but Paul tells us that Jesus is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth because He existed before the world began. Plus, Jesus is supreme over all creation because of this. Verse 16 I find very interesting – “Everything has been created through him and for him”. To me, this sounds like the world and everything in it was created around the mission of Jesus – the cross. Plus, Paul tells us that Jesus holds all creation together. Paul makes a strong statement here because one of the false teachings that was going on within the Colossian Church was that the physical world was evil and God could not have created it. This meant that Jesus could only be in charge of the spiritual world. Paul throws cold water on this teaching. Jesus is equal to God and both of them hold all creation together. Jesus makes this statement in Matthew 28: 18 before He ascends to heaven, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. (NLT)” This earth is a dying earth because of sin. The earth was a holy place before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. The bigger item we need to understand here is that Jesus is the supreme authority on earth. He was there when earth was created and He will be there when the old earth is destroyed and a new earth / Jerusalem is created after His second return. Paul adds onto this in Philippians 2: 9-11, “Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor

and gave him the name above all other names,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father. (www.biblegateway.com)”

God has elevated His Son to the highest honor and He has the name above all other names. Plus, every knee shall bow before Him. You and me at some point will bow before Jesus. Jesus is our supreme authority. Paul would say let no one tell you differently.

So, how does this fit into today’s world? When we follow Jesus, we have to remember He has supreme authority over the earth. There’s no one else that’s better to follow. The Colossian Church was having problems with Greek philosophy entering the church and people were looking to Greek teachers for guidance and understanding. I remember before I got saved, I enjoyed reading different philosophies. I liked Spinoza and Kant. However, I noticed something that was disturbing to me when I read these philosophers. Over time, their philosophy would change. They would either become more conservative or liberal

if I may use those terms. To me, how could one trust human philosophers if their own philosophy would change over time? Even if we think they are advanced in their thinking, they are still limited in human thought. Then we have Jesus. Why would I follow human philosophy that is always changing because philosophers are so limited in their thinking while Jesus took part in all creation including humans? I would rather follow Jesus who is all knowing and isn't always changing His teaching to fit His own understanding. Jesus is all knowing. Jesus remains the same because He already knows the future in full. This is where the Sovereignty of God comes in. Jesus has the perfect will, wisdom and pleasure to rule and there is no one better to rule and no one better to follow. We may not like, at the time, where Jesus is leading us, but after awhile when we look back behind us, we'll discover it was the best road to be on at the time. Paul wants the Church to understand there is no one that can compare to Jesus – He is supreme. We also have to keep in mind that Jesus is even supreme over denominations as well and we'll look at that more next week in the second part of the Colossians Scripture we had read earlier. Some people will follow a denomination more than following Jesus and we have to be careful of that. Sometimes denominations allow false teaching in like the early church did and we need to call it out like Paul did during his time. I'll close with this. All we need to remember from this Scripture during the time we live in is what Paul says in verse 15 that Jesus is supreme over ALL creation. This is common sense theology. I'd rather follow someone who knows where their going at all times and Jesus knows how to lead us in the time we are living in. If you feel uncomfortable with the world today, follow Jesus. He already knows the future and He'll know how to lead us through it. Ask Jesus to help you to follow Him through His Spirit today. Jesus is Supreme on this earth!

NLT Living Study Bible. Tyndale House Publishing: Wheaton, 1996