

The Supremacy of the Beloved Son

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[0 : 0 0] Hey, everybody. Hey, I just, I heard somebody say that they were from Spokane, Washington. Who was that? I'm from Port Townsend, Washington. So I get excited whenever I hear people who are from the same place so far away. Yeah, Spokane is beautiful. My dad was a church planner, and I grew up in a church about this size. So this is home to me. This is great. I love what God's doing, that you all would see it so important to structure your life around gathering together with believers and hearing God's Word taught as you continue. Like, this is such a sweet fruit of the Spirit that I see you guys, that you're here, and I love to be here. And I think the best way that I can serve you is by laying out a meal of God's Word, because this has the power to change us. This has the power to remind us of our Savior, to transform people from self-centered sinners, to God-loving new creations. So it's that new creation that I want us to observe in our text today, and then we'll apply. But I've chosen a text that I got to share with my teens last year, and it's Colossians chapter 1, and verses 15 through 20. Sweet. I have a PowerPoint,

I didn't even know it. There you go. So Colossians chapter 1, and I'm going to look at the verses 15 through 20. And this is a section of God's Word that is, it's kind of arranged as a hymn. I'm going to explain that a little bit more, like a hymn you would sing. But before we get into that, I just remind you, give you a little bit of context of Colossians. So there's a man named Epaphras that you're familiar with from the letter of Colossians. We learn about him in chapter 1, and in chapter 4. And I'm going to warn you, if you don't already, you're going to want your Bible, because I'm going to be pointing to verses and like showing you how things connect.

But in chapter 1 and chapter 4, we learn about this guy named Epaphras, and I take him to be actually the pastor of the church at Colossae. And perhaps even the pastor who is helping the churches of Hierapolis and Laodicea. There's these three little churches in a valley called the Lycus Valley. And so he struggles, as chapter 4 says, and strives so that Christ, so that these people in the valley would stand fully assured in all the will of God. And he works really hard, Paul says, so that this would happen. Well, Paul gets this communication from Epaphras, and we learn about, you can see that in chapter 1. Look at verse, let's see, it's verse 7.

Okay, so he's talking about how they had heard about the grace of God. In verse 7, just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He's a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. So Paul heard from this man, Epaphras, about how God is doing work in the Lycus Valley among the Colossians.

But something else that he must have learned from Epaphras as well, was that they are facing some kind of pressure. As you read through the letter of Colossians, you learn that there's this competitive false teaching that is either confronting the church in Colossae right now, or it may be coming soon, and Paul's aware of it, and Epaphras is aware of it, so they want to be ready for it when it comes. But it's some kind of teaching that is going to take Christ down a couple notches, and say that you need Christ and other things, if you're going to be right with God. Christ isn't enough by himself. So Paul spends time, first of all, thanking God for what God is doing in them. They're truly like, they've come to believe the gospel, and your faith and your love, Epaphras tells me about it, it's genuine. And so that's what we have in the first few verses here of Colossians. And then when he gets to verse 15, Paul is going to do something, instead of like going right after the error, he's going to do something a little bit backwards. He's going to start just with a big expose of the beautiful doctrine of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Okay, so if you're going to, there's two ways you can fight error. Okay, so you can, you can, there's one way is you can spend all your energy pointing out how it fails to do what it claims to accomplish. Okay, or how, how it claims, or what it claims to do and accomplish is actually something that's harmful and dangerous for you. Okay, that's one way you can fight error. It's actually a great sales technique. So if you were trying to sell a

product to somebody, you need to be able to demonstrate why they're old something is deficient, and they don't, it doesn't work for your needs. Okay, like I've got this blender all blender 6,000, and I want you to buy it.

[4 : 53] I've got to be able to demonstrate, listen, that old blender, it gets dull so fast. It can't make smoothies out of tree bark like this thing can. And so you've got to point out that that's insufficient and something better. Okay, well, there's another way to fight error. And that is to actually have a product, or that there's another way to fight error. And that's actually to, to declare the truth in such a clear, careful way that it speaks for itself. And that also happens to be a great sales technique. You can actually have a product that does what it says, and it sells itself, right? You, it's manifestly obvious why you need this, because look what it does. Well, Paul's going to take both of those strategies when it comes to this false teaching that the Colossians are facing.

He's going to point out how it harms, and it's dangerous, and actually leaves people without Christ. Like, they think, they think that having Christ plus what this stuff is, is going to get them where they need to be, but it actually is going to leave them without where they need to be, and without Christ, disconnected from Christ. So he's going to talk about that later in the letter. But first, his first move isn't to talk about all that. It's just, let's just talk about our Savior and who He is.

Let's exalt in Him. And that's what I want to do this morning. It's just, it's the day after Christmas, and as we get into a new year, this is, this is the one thing that I think we, we need, is we need a clear understanding of who our Jesus is, and how satisfying He is. And that's what this passage does, is it holds Him up as the supreme creator of all things, and the ruler over the new creation. So that's what we're going to do. We're going to look at that today. So in this section of Colossians, Paul's going to make a preemptive strike on the false teaching by reminding the believers that Jesus is sovereign enough to be all that they need. And that's my, that's my message today. Jesus is sovereign enough, okay? He's, he, he's in charge enough. He, he's in control of all things enough to be everything that we need.

So he's going to remind the Colossian believers this. They don't need what the false teachers are going to offer. They don't need special regulations to abide by. They don't need anything more than what they have in Jesus. So before we look at the, the meaning of our passage, okay, I'm going to walk through the verses, and I'm going to point, I'm going to explain words and what they mean and how they connect and things. But before we do that, I want us to notice a little bit about how the, our passage actually fits together, the structure of it, because it's got kind of a unique structure.

[7 : 18] You're probably familiar with that a little bit. So before I go any further, why don't I just read it, read through, and so that as I talk and point out things, you can, you can make those connections a little easier. So verse 15, he, and that's referring back to the beloved son from verse 13. You just look up there. He's delivered us. God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. So now that's the referent we're talking about. That's the antecedent of he, in whom, Jesus, we have redemption. He, Jesus, the beloved son, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him, all things are created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him, all things hold together.

And he's 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. All right. So, so many commentators will point out that this passage is in the structure of some kind of poem or hymn. And I think that's, I think they're the right to see that. Some go even further and speculate that this is, this is a hymn that some saint wrote and Paul knew about it and was like, yeah, that's really great. I'm going to use it in my letter. That's fine. I have no problem with that. I think it goes a little bit beyond what we can see from the text. I think Paul wrote it, just a personal opinion. But whether it was something that someone else wrote or whether it was something that Paul wrote, Paul is using it for his purposes.

So that's, so it's his, it's his stuff. Okay. So he thinks this is the right way to say things about Christ. Well, I wanted to give you kind of a visual representation without a visual aid of the way this is structured, the passage is structured. It's composed of two stanzas or two verses. Okay. Just like we're saying, what child is this? Verse one, verse two. There's two verses to this hymn held together by a bridge. Bridges are really simple in music. They just get you from one verse to the next verse, usually some creative, interesting way with some, you know, element that ties the

verses together.

So that's what we have. We have, we have verse one, we have verse two, and we have a bridge that holds these two verses together. I'm going to show you why I think that from, from the text here. So if you will, the structure as I see it is, it's kind of like a, the body of a butterfly.

Okay. So you have one wing is the first stanza. Then you have the body, and then you have the other wing is the second stanza. And actually the reason why I think a butterfly is so apt is because the bridge is, acts like a hinge. It acts, it like holds the two verses together conceptually. I'll, I'll show you that in a second here. So look at the beginning of verse 15. Here's where I think we have verse one. See how it starts. He is, and then it goes on the image of the invisible God.

[10:51] Okay. And then the firstborn of all creation. Okay. Now look at verse 18. This is what I would understand as the second stanza. Look how it starts in the middle of verse 18 after, and he is the head of the body of the church. There's a period in my translation. I think that's helpful. It says, he is the beginning, comma, the firstborn. So do you see that he is the firstborn, the repeated?

So in verse 15, you say, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn something. Okay. And then there in the middle of verse 18, he is the beginning, the firstborn of something else.

Okay. So those, those parallel structures, that's marking the one verse and this is marking the second verse. Okay. And look at the beginning of verse 16. See how it, in my translation, it says four. In the Greek, the *tau* is just, it's just this little article that helps you to know he's going to give you a reason for something. Okay. Four, the beginning of verse 16. But then if you look down at verse 19, there's another one there, four. Okay. So what you have so far is you have a statement about who Christ is. He is this, the firstborn something for, okay. And then you go to the next verse and it's the same thing. He is this, the firstborn of something for, and he's going to give a reason for why he is that title. Okay. So you have these two, two distinct sections. So I think stanza one is verse 15 through 16. Okay. And then stanza two starts halfway through 18 and goes to the end. That leaves a few statements here in the middle as our bridge, as this little transition piece that goes from one to the next. So the first line, I'm calling it a bridge just because that's terminology I think we're more familiar with today. So the first line of that bridge, if you look with me at the beginning of verse 17, see how it starts, and he is, and then, and then it says, and in him, all things hold together. And then verse 18, and he is, they all start with this and. This is a repetition I think that helps hold these all together here. So, and he is before all things, verse 17. The way I understand this is that statement acts as a hinge by summarizing the verse that just came before it. So that first line, and he is before all things, that's summarizing verse one, he just said. Okay. And I'm going to show how he does that. Okay. Then the next little statement. Actually, let me skip the middle one because I'm going to come back to that. So, and he is verse 17, and he is before all things. And then look at the beginning of verse 18. I'm on purpose skipping one of the lines. So this is the third line now in the bridge. I, I, beginning of verse 17 was the first, and now the third line. Thank you so much for following with me. I know this is like really close and then like, I wouldn't pay attention here. Okay. So verse 18, and he is the head of the body, the church. Okay. So this is going to summarize now the verse that follows. Here's how the hinge works.

Okay. The first line summarizes what just came. The last line summarizes what's about to come. But that leaves over one line in the middle. This one little statement that holds the whole poem together. That holds the whole hymn together. Do you guys see what line that is? Right? I don't think that's on accident, personally. I think this is a brilliantly structured poem. It's a line that says, in him, all things hold together. Okay. I think that was just beautiful emphasis of Paul in the way he writes this poem. Okay. So that's the structure. I think that's helpful for us to think about this poem in kind of like these two chunks with this little bridge working in between. So that's the reason why I would have two main points that I want to make for you guys this morning.

One, so what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you two reasons why Jesus is sovereign enough to be everything you need. And the first reason is because he is the ruler over all creation. And the second one is he is the ruler over the new creation. Okay. So those are the reasons that Paul goes for. That's what he reaches for to help the Colossians deal with what they've got to deal with. So I think those are things that we need to deal with what we've got to deal with as well. So let's consider that first reason and it'll be in the first stanza. So Jesus is the ruler over all creation. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. Okay. So I've already pointed out that he's referring to Jesus.

[15 : 45] We don't need to look very far to see the context that he's the beloved son. John 4 24 teaches us that God is spirit. Okay. No one has ever seen God. He's invisible. Further, John teaches that no one has ever seen him in verse 18. So how do you know what God looks like? Well, you need to look at his image.

That image is something that he's provided in the person of Jesus. So where else have you heard that term image before? If you guys ever in your Bible reading, wherever you heard that concept of image or likeness. Yeah. Genesis, the very beginning of the Bible. In Genesis 1 26 through 28, we see that God made man in the image of himself. Right? Male and female, he created them after his likeness.

And he gives man, in that passage, the responsibility to exert dominion over creation. Okay. The very next thing, after he's created them in his image, he says, then he gave him dominion over the land, the fish, the sea, the sky, and he gives them the responsibility to rule, rule his creation. And you remember how that went? Not, not too great. Okay. He failed to image God properly. I just made that word a verb. He failed to image God properly by failing to rule well. Well, when we, when Christ came, he imaged God perfectly. He, he reflected what God was like by ruling well. So much so that when, when Philip asks Jesus, show us the Father, Jesus is like, have you been with me so long? You've seen the Father. I'm here. Like, you can see what he looks like in me. Whoever has seen me, Jesus says, has seen the Father. So if you want to know what the invisible God looks like, look to Jesus. He's the image of the invisible God. The Son, then, is God's invisible image. But in what way is he imaging God?

Okay. We've hinted at that a little bit. Well, the text says he's the firstborn of all creation. Okay. I'm just trying to follow the logic of this passage. I'm just going line by line here. He's the firstborn over all creation. Some modern cults, I'm sure you're familiar with this, use this passage to attempt to prove that Jesus was a created being. Okay. That he was the first in a series of created things. Okay. He was the firstborn of all created things. Okay. So they'll use this passage to try to argue that. But I would, I would challenge that and ask, can you actually really argue that from this passage? On the surface, it looks like you could. But I would say, but if you think about it, you can't. It doesn't work. The logic doesn't add up. And I want to show that to you real quick. The very next verse, it starts with that little, that little, that word four. Okay. Now that word is going to indicate that he's about to give a reason for something.

[18 : 48] So here's why he's the image of God, the firstborn of all creation. It's because, and then he's, and he explains why. Well, what's the rationale that he's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation? Whatever he's about to say in verse 16, it's the rationale for calling him the firstborn. Okay. So what does he say in verse 16? He says, for by him, all things were created in heaven and on earth. Okay. That's all the places where created things exist. Visible and invisible.

Those are the modes in which created things exist. Whether thrones or dominions, powerful positions. Okay. Or rulers or authorities, powerful personalities. All things were created through him and for him. Okay. Everything that was made without exception was made by Jesus. That's just a point that I would want to pause on for a second. Do you believe in your day-to-day life, your schedule, in and out, wake up, go to sleep, that everything you interact with, everyone you interact with was made by Jesus. Like you look at the bottom of something that says made by, made by China most of the time. Okay. You, you turn it over. Everything was made by Jesus. I, um, I just want to challenge us to like wake up a little bit and don't allow the culture around us to continue to seep into the way we think and see things. You're like, no, no, no, no. Um, this was God made. Jesus made you. How in the world could I harm you? How in the world could I talk like you like this? Because you were made in the image of God. Jesus handmade you. Um, so now let's watch carefully for the logic now that I'm trying to point out between verse 15 and 16. How does it make sense that Jesus should be called the firstborn of all creation? Well, here's the reason. Because he made everything. You tell me if it fits the title firstborn in the sense of the, the way that modern cults will use it. I'm specifically thinking of, uh, Mormonism would make this claim. Uh, he's the firstborn. He was the first one who was created because the sun created all things. Here's how the logic would work if that's the case. Because the sun created all things in heaven on earth, visible, invisible. That's the reason because he created all things. That's the reason why we can call him firstborn of all created things. I don't, I don't get logic here. Hold on. Because, because he's the one who made it all, that's the one, that's the reason why he gets to be called the first one to be made.

There's just a breakdown. Nothing's making sense between 15 and 16. Okay, let's think about it a different way. The term firstborn, okay, this is kind of the tricky word that, that leads some people to think that he means the first one created in a series of created things. The term firstborn is used in, in a couple different ways in the Bible. There's another sense in which it's used. I want to show you an example of that. And it's actually a pretty fairly common usage, I would argue. It's not some specialty sense that like, hey, this is how we can make Colossians read what we want it to read. [21 : 56] No, no, it's actually a normal way to use the word term firstborn. Um, I'm going to actually pull you to the Old Testament to show you an example, because I think this example is just right point on to what I want to do. Look at Psalm 89. Look at Psalm 89. And I'm going to look at verse 27 specifically.

Give you a chance to get over there. So in Psalm 89, God is speaking to David, the youngest of David's brothers. Catch that. He's the youngest of his family. That he will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. You see that in verse 27? So you can observe two things about the way that that term is used here.

So remember, the New Testament is built on the Old Testament. So the thinking, the thought of the Old Testament gets pulled into the New Testament. Where does Paul get ideas for words? He knew his Old Testament, and he lived in a Greek culture. So he's not like removed from the ideas of the Old Testament. That's why, that's why I'm going back to the Old Testament, because this is the world that he breathed and thought in. You can observe two things about the firstborn in this verse. One is it's not being applied to someone who is firstborn. Right? David, the youngest. All his older brothers. He's not a firstborn. Okay. Second thing is look at the way it is used in this verse. It looks like it's being used synonymously with the title, the highest of the kings of the earth. See that? In the Bible, it says, I'm going to make you firstborn. The highest of the kings of the earth. So somehow this title has some, is something, it's not the same thing, but it's like saying similar things. If you're firstborn, it's like you're, you're the highest of the kings of the earth. Okay? Some kind of like ruler position.

You get to like be in control of something or in charge of something. So now how does that logic fit? If we take it in that sense that we just saw here in Psalm 89. Because the son created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Okay. That's the reason why he gets to be its ruler. You make it, you get to rule it. Does that logic fit a little bit better? I think it's crystal. I'd have to twist a lot of things to say the other way. To say that because he made all things, that's why he gets to be the first one to be made. Like it just falls apart. So you just, all you have to do is think just a little bit further on that. And I think you'd have a hard time seeing that it means anything different. Well, you make it, you get to rule it. Well, maybe you're seeing a connection now a little bit between this image of God and the responsibility to rule over creation. Okay. So this was Adam's job in the beginning. To image God by ruling well over all the creation that God had made.

[25 : 02] He failed, introducing sin and death into the world. But God's beloved son came and imaged God perfectly. And he not only rules over creation well, but that qualifies him to rule over God's new creation. The start of which is the church. That's going to be stanza two. But before we get to the bridge in the stanza, there's one little phrase in verse 16 that I just want to draw your attention to. All things were created through him and for him. Okay. So remember, turn it over and it says made by Jesus. But you turn it over and now we see from the text that it says made by Jesus for Jesus. Now add that to the way you see everything. This wasn't just, it isn't just here. We're not just here by chance. God didn't just start this thing and leave. God made this thing for Jesus. Do you see those two words in your Bible? For him. So I know why you exist. I don't know you. I've never met you until this morning.

But I know one of the most important things about your life. You exist for Jesus. You were made by him and you exist for Jesus. I know why the grass exists. I know why mushrooms exist. They exist for Jesus.

Now you want to think about like, well, how does that work? How is it for Jesus? How is it to his benefit? We can go passages and explore that more. But right now Paul just says you exist for Jesus.

I know why the universe is here. It's for Jesus. So one reason the Colossians should believe that Jesus is sovereign enough to be everything they need is because he's sovereign over all creation. Why is he sovereign over all creation?

Because he made it. He gets to do whatever he wants with it. He made it. And it all exists for him. All right. So that should give us one reason why you and I should be reminded, okay, Jesus is enough. Of all the things that I'm going after in life, I want him to be number one. [27 : 16] He is enough for me. There's nothing I will run into that is not under his sovereign control. Nothing. Visible or invisible. Microscopic or macroscopic. The opposite of microscopic.

Nothing. He's sovereign over it all. So in this little bridge section now, Paul summarizes the whole first stanza by the statement, and he is before all things.

So that state of being clause, he is before all things, refers to Jesus's timeless position as the one who both existed before everything existed. Like he told the Jews in John 8, he said, before Abraham was, I am. Okay, so that's pointing to his pre-existence, his being before all things. But then as the one who existed before all things were made, and the one through whom all things were made, he's also first in rank. And so he comes before everything in that way as well. As the one who existed before, he's the one that is above all things in rank. He's sovereign of a creation. And in him, all things hold together. This is a favorite, a special point to me. I just, I love nature. I love God's creation. I mentioned mushrooms because I really enjoy hunting for mushrooms. And just, you know why? I don't really like the taste of mushrooms. I just love to look at their intricacies, and they're so interesting and weird. But in animals and birds, trees, I can't wait to teach all my sons all about it. But I love to see what God has made. But a lot of times I find that I don't make the connection one step further as it ought to be. I enjoy the gift, and it's beautiful.

[29 : 14] Like, this is so amazing. Look at this. And I stop there. Instead of seeing, like, this was God's handiwork. God, this is so cool. And like, go one step further. Or like, when I observe gravity do its thing, and an apple falls, or just any of these laws of nature that we call laws of nature, I just want to challenge us for a second. According to this, it says, Jesus holds all things together.

So I would say, those laws of nature, you're actually watching Jesus at work. He's actively holding everything together. So we put a name on it and call it this impersonal law.

Okay, I'll just call it, that's Jesus working. Gravity, boom. Jesus is holding his world together. Like, whatever you want to call it, we're watching Jesus at work. So let's, again, let's not, like, drink the culture around us that wants to de-personify, that wants to pull God out of everything. Like, let's call it for what it is. We're watching Jesus at work right now with this plant growing. He's holding everything together. My heart beating. Explain that. He's holding it all together. He's maintaining his creation. So let's look at that third line of the bridge.

So he's before all things, in him all things hold together, and now he's the head of the body, the church. This statement now is going to summarize the second stanza. The second reason that the Colossians should be able to believe that Jesus is sovereign enough to be everything they need is that he is the rightful ruler over the new creation. That is the church, okay? There are many metaphors that the New Testament uses to describe the church, okay? Body is one of the most common ones.

So Jesus is to the church what a head is to the body. What does your head do for your body? Just think about that for a second. What would you do? What would happen if you didn't have your head?

[31 : 24] You would just sit there. Unless you were a chicken. Then you take a little while. Oh, ask me why I know. Okay. So it would sit there and not move. But heads are the command center for our bodies, okay? Heads tell your body what to do. It governs the body. It rules the body. It provides nourishment to the body. It's through, you know, and that's how you get nourishment. Well, Paul's trying to help us to understand about, help us to understand something about the relationship between Jesus and his church and his, this new creation is what, what Paul is referring to it as. He's using a word that describes, sorry, he's the head of the church in that Jesus rules it. He nourishes it. He guides it. He controls it. He governs it. The body looks to him for, for leadership. The body looks to him for nourishment. It does whatever Jesus pleases. And thankfully, whatever Jesus pleases is really, really good for the body. Okay. Well, when Paul talks about the, the church, okay, he's using a word that in the Greek culture was just a common term for assembly. But what we find in the New Testament is almost all the times that it's used is it's being used in a special way to refer to the assembly that gathers to worship Jesus. Okay. So it's a common word that you people assemble for something, but we're always seeing it. People are assembling to worship Jesus. So it's, it's kind of taken on this, if you will, religious understanding, this word church in the Greek. So it's not just referring to any assembly. It's the, it's the assembly that has gathered to worship Jesus as its head.

So now we move from the bridge, okay, into the second stanza where Paul reminds the Colossians of the second reason that Jesus is all we need. Why is Jesus sovereign enough to be all we need? It's because he's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. See that in the middle of verse 18, that's the second stanza. He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.

This word for beginning in this passage is being used kind of as a title. It's referring to the role that a person takes. Okay. It's, it means the one with whom a process begins. He's the beginning. It's used this way in Revelation. If you remember in verse, in chapter 22, verse 13, near the end of the Bible, Jesus says of himself, I'm the alpha and the omega.

I'm the first and the last. I'm the beginning and the end. So this is the same way Paul is using it here. Jesus is the beginning. He's the one with whom the process started. And as we learn in Revelation, he's going to be the one with whom the process culminates. But are we talking, so are we thinking like everything being created, like we were talking about in the first stanza, like, like John 1, 1 describes, in, in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God and not, and everything that was made was made by him.

[34 : 30] In this second stanza, he's using the beginning to refer to something other than natural creation. He's, he's focusing it now and talking about something else. Jesus, he's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Okay? The beginning of those who come from the dead.

Right? So, like, following the words, if he's the beginning of the one who, of the ones who are raised from the dead, who are the ones who are raised from the dead? Those are the ones who are born again. Those are the ones who have been regenerated. Those, those are, those are, those are what we'll call the church.

So, this is where I'm getting the idea of the church being the new creation. Is, is there, they're the born again people, the made new people. So, he's the beginning of the church. Do you ever consider the church, um, as a tangible product of God beginning to make all things new? Okay, so we know that in Revelation, we have the promise, I'm going to make all things new. Like, curse lifted.

Bodies healed. Made like they were meant to be. Free from disease. From pain. From aches. Relationships mended. Sin no more.

Okay, that, that is promised to be in our future. But what I would challenge you with, from this passage, from Colossians, he says even more about this as we go, is that, that work doesn't start in Revelation.

[36 : 00] It has started when Jesus got out of the grave. And as he began to call people, and they trust in Christ, and they are made new inside, this new creation has begun in seed form.

Jesus is going to crank it into full gear when he comes back, and he's going to make everything new. Okay, but do not make the wrong assumption that we're just waiting for God to make things new one day. He's about that work by placing his spirit in us.

To make us new from the inside out. So the church then, think of it in these terms. We're the new creation. God's starting to do new things in us by changing our desires.

By making us more and more like Christ. We're not just an institution. We don't just come to this store back. And this isn't, this isn't us.

Like, what we are, the truth part of us, is that we're, we're the new creation in Jesus. We're not a temporary project of evangelism between Israel and, like, the new heavens and new earth.

[37 : 09] Like, this is plan A. God, God, this isn't a plan B that God's trying to fix stuff because Israel messed up. Okay. Alright, well, how did Jesus begin his church?

He started the church by first rising from the dead, then sending his spirit from heaven to come and live in all those who trust him. All those who recognize that Christ's death and resurrection counts as theirs by faith.

So Jesus is the firstborn from the dead now in two senses. Okay. So we already kind of took that word and saw that it doesn't strictly mean, especially in that context, the first one in a series.

It means the ruler over something. Okay. Well, now, when we take firstborn down here, we're getting actually both senses. Because in one sense, he was the first one to rise from the dead.

Some of you guys are like, I read my Bible, other people raised from the dead before him. Right. But we're talking about firstborn from the dead in the way that Paul is talking about it here.

[38 : 12] And that is to never die again. Okay. Jesus was the first one who rose from the dead and will never die again. But he's not going to be the last one. Every one of you who trust in Christ are also going to be born from the dead after we give up these mortal bodies.

So he was the first one ever to rise from the dead and ever die again. Those many people have been raised. Jesus raised some. Jesus' resurrection is different and new.

Second way firstborn is being used is, he's second, as the one who started this new kind of resurrection, the same logic as before.

As the one who started it, he gets to rule it. So if he spoke and all things came into being, therefore he gets to be the ruler over it. Same spot here. If Jesus spoke and new life happens, he's the one who gets to rule it.

So he's beginning this new creation, and as it's firstborn, he gets to rule over all those who are born anew. Well, what was the result of God raising Jesus from the dead?

[39 : 24] Let's look at the text. It says he's the firstborn of the dead. That, in this case, here's a result going to come. Here's the intended result of him being firstborn from the dead.

That, in everything, he might be preeminent. If you were the preeminent chef in all America, what would that mean of you? If you were the preeminent, yeah, you'd be the best chef in all America. If you were the preeminent quarterback in all the NFL, what does that make you? It means that there's no one better than you in your field. Like, you've got all the skills, you've proven yourself, you're tested, you're the top.

There's no one that ranks above you, okay? Listen to what Paul says in Philippians. A letter he wrote, similar time, about Jesus' death and ensuing resurrection.

You don't have to turn there. Let's listen to what he says in verse 5 through 11, chapter 2. Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

[40 : 31] But he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. That's how he emptied himself. By taking the form of a human servant. Being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

Even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him. Now listen for the definition of preeminent. The name that is above every name.

That's what preeminent means. So, Jesus died, according to Colossians here, and was the firstborn from among the dead, in order that he might be the one, that he might have the name above every name.

That he might be the preeminent one. So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and earth, under earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That's what he says in Philippians, just to help you get the idea of what we're talking about, about being preeminent. Being given the name that is above every name. No one ranks above you. So Jesus' obedience to God, his death on the cross, and finally his defeat of death, rising from the grave, qualifies him to get the name preeminent one.

[41 : 47] Lord. That's Paul's logic. Okay. So what's the reason, then, that Jesus is fit to be the one who starts this church, this new creation? What's the reason why he gets to be the one who rules over it?

There are two reasons that Paul gives. Verse 19 and 20. You guys see that? See how it starts? For, in verse 19. So here's why he gets to be the firstborn of all of the dead.

The ruler of this new creation. The first reason? For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Reason number one. Reason number two?

And through him, borrow the subject from the earlier phrase, all the fullness of God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.

We have two reasons. One, because it was in Jesus that all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And two, it was through Jesus that God was pleased to reconcile all things.

[42 : 51] So these are the two reasons that Paul gives. Let's look at those real quick. So the first reason? It was God's pleasure that all his fullness should dwell in Jesus. It's really simple. God the Father wanted all that he is in himself to dwell in a human form on earth so that people could see what God was like.

And not only to see what he was like, but in meeting him and repenting and trusting in him, they might be forgiven and restored to a relationship to God. Right? So Jesus is fit to be the one who rules over the church because he has the fullness of God in him.

Okay? So that's reason why, number one, why he gets to be the one in charge. He's got God. He's God. Like, Paul uses the word, he has God in him. But in theology, we put it all together and we say, he is God.

Right? Well, the second reason he gives is that God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself through Jesus. Jesus is fit to be the one who rules over the new creation, the church, because he's the one through whom God has chosen to reconcile all things.

But there's really just one big reason when we take these two pieces. God chose to dwell in Christ and to reconcile all people through Christ. Because, what's this big reason?

[44 : 16] Do you want to take a stab at what's the reason that he did this? In verses 19 and 20. I'll give you a hint. It's in verse 19. What's God's big reason for doing these things?

For choosing Jesus and reconciling all people? It's his pleasure. You got it. Yep. That's what the text tells us. He was pleased to do it.

That is, when you're reaching for answers, the Bible gives us a lot of reasons for things, like suffering, for why things happen. But this is one of the biggest reasons you can get, one of the top level for why God does what he does.

Psalm says it in another way. Our God is in the heaven and he does whatever he pleases. So what's the motivating factor for God? Well, it's whatever he pleases.

So I would say that needs, that should drive you to know your God to see whether you can trust him or not. You know, you only want someone to do what they please if you can trust their character.

And if you guys are believers, you're not believers ignorant to that fact.

[45 : 25] You're believers because you have seen God's character in his word and in your life. And you know that when God does whatever he pleases, it's very good for me. Even if it's temporarily painful, ultimately the scriptures teach us there is good that is unweighable for us in all that God does.

So he does what he does. He chose Christ to reconcile all things to himself because that's what he wanted to do. That's his pleasure. It brought pleasure to him to do this this way. If you ever asked yourself, why me?

Like, why did God reveal himself to me? Why did I get saved? Why did I get to know this? And I have an answer for you. It's because God was pleased to do it. So in your thanks to him, think him that way.

Okay, God, you didn't have to do this. Like, I'm a nobody. Like, no different from anyone else.

Thank you for just, in your kindness, doing this for me.

Let that be the way that we talk to our God. Because he does what he does because he pleases. It pleases him. So what exactly are all things, are the all things that God is reconciling?

[46 : 36] You see in verse 19, verse 20, I apologize. Verse 20, And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, includes everything that is on earth or in heaven.

Okay, but this is a clue, though, to what we're talking about. We've already seen this phrase of whether on earth or in heaven, and it was continued further. Whether invisible or visible, thrones or dominions, rulers or powers and authorities.

Absolutely all created things, without exception, will be reconciled to God through the work of Jesus Christ. That's what this passage is saying. So now we need to ask ourselves some questions as we grapple that.

About what kind of reconciliation are we talking exactly? Reconciliation with God is amending of a relationship that was torn. Okay, so we're bringing something back.

We're reconciling a relationship that was torn. And we know it was the relationship that was torn in the garden when Adam and Eve chose to decide for themselves what is good and right. Well, this reconciliation, this mending that torn relationship, happened, the text tells us, by God making peace through the blood of Christ's cross.

[47 : 59] See that very end? Making peace by the blood of the cross. Okay, let's just keep teasing this out a little further. You're saying all things reconciled with God, and that peace is made through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the death of Christ on the cross.

It sounds to me that you're telling me that Jesus' death on the cross is the means by which everything, without exception, is brought into a right relationship with God.

Anyone feeling uncomfortable with what I'm trying to tease out here? Okay, that sounds to me, you guest speaker, like the error of universalism, where in the end everyone's going to be saved.

Well, people will take you to this passage and try to argue with you that that's the case. Look, all things, made right, reconciled with God. And you'll be like, yeah, that's what it says. Okay. That would be a terribly unbiblical error to make, though. People only make that erroneous conclusion from this text when they misunderstand what reconciliation and what making peace means.

[49 : 16] So I want to challenge us believers to think about these concepts for a second. Reconciling something does not always entail a positive result for that which is reconciled.

Okay? What it means is that something that was out of a right standing or out of an appropriate relationship with something has now been restored to an appropriate relationship with something. Now it fits that this is so and this is so. They're rightly related. As a believer, when we place our faith in Jesus, God's wrath for our sin is poured out on Jesus.

And therefore, I can be placed into an appropriately beneficial relationship with my God. But when God's wrath is poured out on those who do not trust in Jesus in a place that the Bible calls hell, that sinner is placed in an appropriate relationship with a holy God.

That unrepentant sinner is placed into a fitting relationship with a holy God. That is reconciliation, brothers and sisters. Colossians also says that he has defeated the powers of darkness.

[50 : 31] Well, how can you have a world that is all things reconciled peace? When there's hell, when there...

God is placing everything into a fitting relationship. Enemies? Pacified. Restrained. Imprisoned. Never to affect anything again in hell. This isn't an imbalance. Nothing's like undone. Done. Reconciled.

Peace made by the death of Jesus Christ. Enemies judged for eternity. Believers rewarded for eternity. Everything is relating as it ought to relate.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Jesus' death is not only the means by which people who trust Christ are positively brought into a right staying with God, but it also means...

[51 : 34] It's also the means by which God decisively judged and defeated the powers of darkness, ensuring the final victory over Satan, sin, and death. So what is this second stanza really about then?

What is this different resurrection? This new creation called the church that Jesus is the head and beginning of? The church is God's plan of reconciling all things and making a new creation actually happening in history right now.

God is about his work of reconciling all things, putting everything rightly relating to him. And we get to be...

We're part of it right here. We're trying to contribute to that mission. Let's all be reconciled to God. Plead with others. You be reconciled to God too, please, as we try to grow in holiness and love for one another and pleading with others as though God is making his appeal through us.

Be reconciled to God. If you're trusting Christ's death and resurrection as your only hope, to be made positively right with God, then you are part of this church over which Christ rules.

[52 : 42] And God has begun to make all things new in you already. Of course, until Christ returns visibly for a second time, God's new creation work, his church, has only begun to transform from the inside out.

We're still waiting for new bodies. We're still waiting for the curse to be lifted. Satan and his forces, though decisively defeated at the cross, are still fighting as though they can win. The earth still longs to be physically remade.

All these things Christ will do when he returns a second time. Well, as I close this morning, I just want to ask you a few questions. Ask us all a few questions. This has been a challenge into my own heart again, as I pick it up and consider these truths.

Just driving here, I repented of ways that I'm not allowing Christ to be supreme in my life, and I need help. God help me to do that. I hope we'll think about this text in that honesty.

The first question I want to ask is, have you been reconciled to God? Do you know that you are rightly reconciled with God in such a way, since I gave that definition, as it positively benefits you?

[53 : 47] Like, have you been born again? Has there been a point in your life, whether it was a prayer, or a point where you realize, like, yeah, I am relying on what Jesus did for my reconciliation with God.

I can't do that. I can't pay the debt that I, my works are stained by my sin. I can't fix what I've wronged. I need a Savior. Is the purpose for which Jesus died and was raised being displayed in your life?

Remember what that purpose was? That in everything, he might be preeminent. So is that, is that, if that was Jesus' goal, as he went to the grave and went up, and raised again, that he might be preeminent in everything.

If that was his goal, is that our goal, and is that visible in our lives, in our work, the way we run our business, the way we love our children, discipline our children, that Jesus may be preeminent, that his name would be viewed in my family as above daddy's name, mommy's name, pastor's name, whatever.

That's not a hierarchy. It's his name the most important to us. Just this past year, I got to sit down with a family, one of my youth families, and they were just sharing with us about how God was moving them, and they were trying to decide whether they were going to move, and take a job somewhere, or stick around, whatnot, and as they were just, they weren't trying to like, do this on purpose, in my perception, but as they were just talking through it, it was evident to me that, whatever their decision was, they just wanted to be in a situation where they could better advance the gospel.

[55 : 35] Like, so if I took this job, you know, we could, I don't know if there's a church there, so maybe it's not, I don't remember exactly the details of what they said, but what was clear to me is like, they're trying to make sure that whatever it is, it promotes Jesus' name.

That's one example of how we can strive to make Jesus preeminent in our life, is you're making day-to-day decisions. Okay, what about the way you're using your time? You're putting the stuff on the schedule. Have you made space on your schedule, with the consideration of, how am I going to make Jesus preeminent in my week?

Okay, so I'm going to meet with some people and encourage them in the word, or I'm going to disciple someone, you know, or this housework that needs to be done, I'm going to do it faithfully, and to God's glory with thankfulness.

This diaper that needs to be changed, I'm going to do this with gratitude that I have a son, and he's alive and poops still. Okay, like, I'm talking every, all the moments, this is just part of discipleship as a Christian, is learning to see the smallest to the largest, moments as, this is all for one purpose, so that we can make our Savior look great, so that others can see how great he is, and also confess the name of Jesus, so that when we meet him, we have no regrets, because we gave him everything, and the regrets we do have, we trust that they've been covered by the blood of Jesus, and then, and then we get to all delight in knowing our God for eternity, okay, in a new creation, and a new heavens and new earth.

So let me just close with one, one, one more question here. So if Jesus is this much in charge, he's sovereign over creation, he's sovereign over the new creation.

[57 : 20] He's the rightful ruler of all things, and he's already made the decisive strike that has rendered all evil powers, openly and shamefully defeated, and he's sufficient to save all who trust him, what do we still fear?

If Christ made all things, and rules over all things, if Christ has defeated the enemies of darkness, and is now ruling over the new creation, then church, what do we have to fear?

Are there things, situations, relationships, circumstances, decisions to be made, that we're worrying about, or fearful of, because they're out of our control?

Hold on now, don't let it stop there. If it's not in your control, this passage says, stop, there's someone who's still in control of it. So, I know we're tempted to, I'm tempted to fear, and I fail at it, and I give in to that fear, and it makes me make bad decisions.

Or it makes me waste time when I could have been content and loving others. Instead, I'm inward and focused on the fear, and making poor decisions, trying to maintain and control and grab and things.

[58 : 32] But, being outside of our control is firmly in the control of the one who made all things, and has also made you a new creation.

So, what do we have to fear, church? Are there things, situations, circumstances, that we worry about or fear? What is left that is not under Christ's rule? What does it say about how we view Jesus' sovereignty when we allow our fears to control the way we live and speak?

Is he sovereign over those things too? We don't need anything greater than Jesus. We don't need anything greater than Jesus to face our trials, to be made right with God. He can protect us from evil. He defeated that. He can save us from our sin. He died for that. He can raise us from the dead. He came up with that idea. He can lead us in a life that pleases God. He did that and does that perfectly. He's the Lord over you. Alright, let's pray together. Dear Father, we thank you for this passage. We thank you how it pushes us to rely on you and our Savior more. [59 : 39] That's what it's done in me. I pray that you'll do that and to these people that I've just only begun to meet, please let let the sovereignty of Jesus be sweet and real to them.

Not because Thomas Slope came and said that, but because they saw with their own eyes in your word the truth about Jesus' nature. So you now have your pleasure in us, your new creation. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.