

LSB Colossians 1:13 - 19 Pt 1

13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him,

Jesus is the Rock that the wise man built his house upon. Jesus is the foundation, the cornerstone of a building assembled of His believers. He is the Stone cut out without hands, in Daniel 2 that crushes all the kingdoms of this world and becomes a mountain.

Jesus is the bread of life. He is the living water that quenches spiritual thirst. He is the light of the world, the only light that shines in darkness. He is the Way. He is the Truth. He is the Life. No man cometh unto the Father, but through Jesus. He is the sole, single, source connection to God.

We are familiar with all of these metaphors and more. Suffice it to say that Jesus is the main thing. If we get Him wrong, the God connection is broken. If we get Jesus wrong, it breaks everything else. There's no partial connections to God the Father. It's all or nothing, and Jesus is the connector.

Two huge therefore's. Therefore we must take time to understand all that the Bible says about who Jesus is. It's absolutely imperative that we get Jesus right, or everything else becomes null. Void. Worthless.

Therefore, from eternity past to eternity future, Satan can do his most effective work to nullify God - man connections by neutralizing Jesus. If, in fact, Jesus as He claimed, is the only possible connection between man the fallen creature and God the Creator, then if you are Satan, it's a no brainer where ground zero is to block and neutralize those connections. Jesus. Take out Jesus. Mangle and disfigure Jesus. Invent Jesus's who aren't the biblical Jesus. Mess up Jesus and christianity breaks.

We have to get Jesus right, or the whole building collapses. Therefore, third therefore, like the U. S. Mint who trains their numismatians to spot fake money by intensely studying the real thing, we christians must gaze upon the real Jesus, continually, so that when Satan comes up with a new phony, empty, neutralized, impotent Jesus, we can spot the fake immediately. Because we've spent time studying the real Jesus until He's locked down in our brains.

This passage in Colossians this morning is ground zero for us to solidify our theology of Jesus. So I hope to spend a couple of weeks right here studying the main thing.

You know, in the four gospels, we spend time with Jesus. And He seems so approachable, so ordinary, so full of love and warmth, until the hurricane is about to sink the boat we're in and Jesus rebukes the wind with words from His mouth, and it becomes still. Or He tells us to feed 5000 people with three small fishes and two loaves, and then He does it. Ordinary, approachable, loving, warm, and; God, incarnate.

Since Jesus is ground zero, and these Colossians are already getting bombarded with things that would falsify and nullify Jesus, Paul takes some time, with his new friends he hasn't met yet, to lay a foundational theology of Jesus. The way to combat Satan's phony Jesus's is with the real one. So that's Paul's purpose here for these folks, and it's also ground zero for us.

Solomon said there's nothing new under the sun. And I was thinking about that as I studied this passage this week. The problems that Joseph Smith re-introduced in the 1830's, redefining a new different Jesus, are almost identical with what was already happening in 30 something years after the resurrection, at Colossae. We'll get into that a little bit later. But suffice to say, Satan is foisting the same old schtick. Same garbage.

Let's take a long drink of the real biblical Jesus, shall we?

Last week we dwelt on vss. 13 and 14. And I've repeated them this morning so that we are in solid context for vs. 15. Paul simply uses the antecedent of Jesus, HE, in vs. 15 so we need the contextual foundation laid again for us.

*13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of **His beloved Son**, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 And **He** is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.*

Forgiveness of sins is the entry point to God the Father. It is the dividing line between two possible groups of mankind. Sin is rebellion against God. And no one goes into His presence as friend, bride, adopted son or daughter, until sin is removed. Sin is a barrier that must be removed in order for us to have a friendship relationship with God.

And that's why Jesus is ground zero. He pays the penalty for our sins. Substitutionary atonement. My sin is paid for by Jesus. His righteousness is transferred to my account. He purchases me out of Satan's kingdom and through forgiveness of sins and transferring His righteousness to my account in it's place, He rescues me out of Satan's grasp and places me into God's kingdom.

That's why Jesus is ground zero. Anything you do that dismantles that Way, that Truth, and the source to that Life renders Jesus impotent. It only happens one way. It only is possible with the biblical Jesus. Efficacious

forgiveness is the gateway for everything.

So if you're Satan, if you can dismantle, limit, and get rid of the biblical Jesus, everything else becomes null and void. Mess with Jesus and the whole remedy is impotent.

So the most common way to do that is to make a Jesus who is less than God. That's the gateway for all false religion that neuters the real Jesus and renders a Jesus that is ineffectual. Powerless to save. Create a Jesus that is less than God.

Why does that spoil salvation? Because only God can forgive the sin that is what separates us from God in the first place. If Jesus isn't God, He is impotent to forgive sins, and we're helplessly bankrupt with zero hope.

God is the forgiver. No one else. And the Jews knew that. So when Jesus one day told a guy that his sins were forgiven; let's just read the account;

Mark 2

*3 And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. 4 And being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. 5 And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, “**My son, your sins are forgiven.**” 6 But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?” 8 And immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? 9 “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your pallet and walk’? 10 **“But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”**—He said to the paralytic— 11 “I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.” 12 And he rose and immediately took up the pallet and went out in the sight of all; so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”*

Those scribes were exactly right about one thing. God, alone, has the authority to forgive sin. There's so much in this story. If you can read minds and tell people what they're saying in their minds, you might be God. If you can by the words that come out of your mouth create new tissue to replace the dead and broken things that caused the paralysis and the man gets up and walks, you might be God.

So in logical order then, if Jesus pronounced that mans sins forgiven, He is either God or He's the biggest blasphemer to ever be born. Or, He has creative powers through words uttered. He uttered the word "rise" and the man's body was renewed to normal strength. That's the same voice that spoke the worlds into existence.

Forgiveness is the gateway out of Satan's grasp and into God's kingdom, and only God can forgive sins. Either Jesus is God or we are bankrupt helpless sinners. Since Jesus could read minds and the paralytic got up and walked on perfect legs, I'm going with; Jesus is God. So did Paul.

15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

Words are important. And all of the heretics want to make this verse say what it does not say, and what anyone who heard it in their original greek language would understand.

He is the image; eikōn. We get our word "ikon" of course.

I was playing play dough with my little grandson Walker and we were picking up different things and squishing them into the play dough making mirror images. You squish Thomas the tank engine into the play dough and when you take it away, there's a rather perfect image left in the play dough of Thomas the tank.

What if Thomas the Tank was invisible? Can't see what it looks like. But I can squish it into the play dough even though I can't see it. That image left

in the play dough would show me what I can't see.

Jesus is that exact image of the invisible God that we can see. Paul tells us why that is, in Col. 2:9; *For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells bodily,*

Jesus is fully God. The 2nd person of the Godhead. Come to earth as a tiny helpless baby that had to be cared for by a mother. And yet still God of very God. Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

First born. And all the heretics will say, see, Jesus is Created. First thing to be created for sure, but created just the same.

The word is; pro-TOT-ok-os It is a compound word. Proto means first. tiktos means begotten. We get our word prototype here.

It doesn't mean He was created and as such less than God. Jesus is eternal. Not created in time. But it does mean that He is pre-emminent over all things created. And Paul's going to spend the next two verses unpacking exactly that.

In jewish thinking and indeed carried through to this day many times, the first born son is automatically the heir apparent. Charles was Queen Elizabeth's first born son and no one doubted that he would some day reign as king of the United Kingdom.

Jesus is eternal God. But what Paul is telling us is that He is the heir of all creation. Everything created belongs to Him. Firstborn, not in creation but in pre-emminent authority and ownership. Jesus owns creation. He reigns over creation.

Let me take you briefly to a scene in heaven that is shown to us in Revelation chapter 5. The document in the scene is the title deed to all creation, including the earth which is about to be restored to it's rightful

owner in cataclysmic judgements.

Rev. 5: 1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it. 4 And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it; 5 and one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

The point is made that no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was worthy to open that title deed. Satan who usurped the authority to reign through the power of sin is unworthy to open this title deed. It doesn't belong to him. He has no claim of ownership.

Jesus is the pre-emminent and rightful heir of this earth. He's about to depose Satan and send him to prison and take this world back as rightful owner. And all heaven and earth sing for joy.

Why is He worthy? Because He purchased, for God, with His precious blood and death, men from every tribe and people group and nation. That blood bought forgiveness of sins. Jesus is God the Son.

16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Everything that IS. Everything that we are discovering in our galaxy and the universes beyond is the result of Jesus, in eternity past, speaking them into existence, ex-nihilo . . . out of nothing.

All of the hosts of heaven. All of the angels. All of the angels who fell and became demons. Satan. All mankind. Everything on the earth. Seen and unseen. Every neutron, every proton, every electron, every atomic particle, He created it all, and it all belongs to Him.

That exacerbates the problem of things that actually belong to Him that have gone rogue. Rebellion. Runaway slaves. They hate their owner and they refuse to be in subjection to Him who rightfully owns them. How is that going to end well? Little pip squeak humans going rogue and rebelling against the God who spoke the endless universes into existence??

Lately it dawns on me daily that Satan with his fool duped humans blindly following his every lead is in an all out war against creation order.

Every thing that God created and called good is being challenged by Satan. Families, marriage of one man one woman for life, sexuality, gender, all of it. Furries are the latest. It's hard to keep up. The guy who shot Charlie Kirk and his boyfriend who is transitioning to girlfriend are furries.

A whole new category of rebellion. It's not enough to rebel against your God assigned sexuality by every form of deviant behavior, homosexuality, transgenderism and now we can go a step further. How dare you create me as an ordinary male human. I declare myself to be a furry. I decide what I am, not God who created everything and owns everything.

We declare that God isn't. And then we declare that we are whatever bizarre thing against creation order we can come up with. I mean, AI is

about 5 minutes old and already we're defying creation order. Our living spirits are going to be made part of some kind of transhuman machine so we can live forever?

My money's on the guy who spoke universes we haven't even seen yet with the Hubbell telescope, into existence, out of nothing. Good luck defying His creation order. Absolute madness defying the Creator who owns you. *all things have been created by Him and for Him.*

The culture is going 150 miles an hour on a bad road rejection God's creation order, and if someone loves them enough, like Charlie Kirk did, to lovingly tell them there's a bridge out ahead, they call that person a hater and kill them.

Me, I'm guilty of standing by, observing, and as they pass me at 150 miles an hour, I'm more like, see ya. Enjoy your flight.

That isn't a good thing. Todd Friel reminded us again, and I'm a very slow learner, that these folks who hate God, hate us, would like to silence us with a 30 or 6 rifle for telling them they're furry nuts, are not the enemy. They're the mission field. To my shame, I'm having as hard a time as anybody remembering that.

Jesus spoke everything that is, visible and invisible, into existence, out of nothing. He is rightful owner of all things, even those things which are in full rebellion and hate Him. He owns all creation.

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

He is before all things. He IS before anything else that is, was. He stated that exact thing to the Jews and they took up stones to stone Him, because only God can make that claim.

John 8:56 *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”* 57 *The Jews therefore said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years*

*old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am**.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.*

While the heretic religious cults base their false systems on denying that Jesus is the 2nd person of the Godhead, the jews understood perfectly that He was claiming to be God.

The reason they were picking up stones to stone Him was precisely because they understood perfectly that was what He was claiming. It was the reason that they executed Him.

John 10:31 The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?” 33 The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.”

Jesus is God. Anything less and no forgiveness of sins is viable. Virtually every brand of cult and heresy attacks truth at this exact point, because sin is the problem, and belief that Jesus is less than God negates any possible solution.

The Mormon church is thriving. There were about 25 cars parked in the lot this morning, to our 6 or so. They're busy busy busy whipping up religiosity and fervor. They come away feeling whatever it is they feel, religiously. But their Jesus has no authority over sins. He isn't God.

There are parallels to what Paul was arguing against that was already showing up at Colossae and our modern versions. Here's what was beginning to happen at Colossae that will show up in this letter over and over as Paul gives them truth to combat error.

The earliest forms of gnosticism was already threatening the church at Colossae. The greek word gnosis means to know. The gnostics like

modern heresies and cults stem from people who know things that can't be found in scripture. Extra biblical "knowing" of things not revealed by God in this book.

The religion of people who know at a higher level of knowing than the ordinary believers incorporated most or all of these heresies beyond scripture. Here's what we know about the gnostics who were trying to draw the Colossians away from the real Jesus.

God is good but matter is evil. This world and everything in it is evil. Emanations come out from God. Good and evil. It was a doctrine based in the philosophy of dualism. An evil spirit emanation being created this world. All matter is evil.

So material things are all evil. But Christ is a good emanation who came to get us back on track. Therefore Christ is a spirit and not a material human. An angelic person. He didn't leave footprints because he wasn't material.

So he's a good spirit equal to other good angels, but he has no power to forgive sins. Bingo. Jesus is rendered impotent and in the bargain you get the worship of angels which we will see later on in Colossians.

Our mormon friends believe something similar. There isn't enough information in this book to adequately save anyone, you need more knowledge.

And Jesus isn't God, he's a son of a major god who is just a man like us with flesh and bone who with a wife produced Jesus and they want to use all of the same language. Grace and redemption and forgiveness of sins and faith but every single one of those words means something entirely different to those friends than it does to us.

Jesus is just a god who came here to show us how we could live righteously and in time be an equal god to him. That Jesus cannot forgive sins, he can only show us how to pull ourselves up by our own righteous boot straps

and stop sinning so much and eventually be as good as he is and be our own god on our own planet with our own wife having baby gods.

Satan spins this stuff out century after century and always Jesus is not enough to forgive sins and he isn't God. Doctrines that eliminate the effectual power of Jesus, who is God, who died in our place and paid the debt for our sins.

The mormon version is particularly confusing because Satan is smart enough to co-opt virtually all of the orthodox christian language and throw our words back at us while in their minds those words mean something totally different.

If Jesus isn't God the Son, co-equal in essence with God the Father and God the Spirit, Co-eternal Creator of all things, then your sins are not forgiven and you will answer to God for open rebellion against His laws. No amount of good works righteousness will ever pay the debt of one single sin. You're nothing but a bankrupt with a debt you can never pay.

A life of works righteousness here and an eternity in hell won't remove one single sin. Do you think maybe we'd better pay attention and get Jesus right?

15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Those seventyfive or so words are enough to eliminate all of the non stop heresies that Satan spins out in order to neutralize Christ and eliminate effectual forgiveness. Faith is only effectual if we believe in the right Jesus. The Jesus who is God and who has authority to forgive sins.

The writer of Hebrews, many think it was probably Paul, begins that

treatise with an almost exact parallel passage.

Hebrews 1:1 *God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, 3 who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

The proof that Jesus is magnitudes higher than angels is in the fact that He is Creator over created. That's the definition of God. Eternal God who has made all things and who owns all things and who holds all things together.

Science has discovered that atomic particles are made up of positive and negative charges that repel each other mathematically and yet every nuclear atomic particle in the universes holds together for some inexplicable reason.

The author of Hebrews says Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power.

Paul tells the Colossians that *He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

And Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:10 that *The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and its works will be laid bare.*

The same Jesus who made the worlds with a word from His mouth, holds the elements together by His "word" and at a certain time will uncreate the elements by a word.

Do you think maybe ***that*** Jesus has within His power and authority the ability to forgive you of sins that He shed His own blood to pay the penalty

for? That's the Jesus I bow my knee before.