

**"This Year I Worship Christ at Christmas" Part 2** 12/9-10/06

Colossians 1:18-23

OPEN to Colossians 1:18 (PAGE 1832)

INTRODUCTION

One Christmas season, a young father and his two daughters stopped to take a closer look at a life-like manger scene.

The father talked about the animals as they walked around looking at the figures. Finally, one of his daughters asked, "Who is that baby, Daddy?"

Her father replied, "Oh, that's Jesus."

His daughters continued to stare into the manger at the face of the baby. "Who is Jesus, Daddy?"

Their father struggled with that question... and realized he couldn't answer it.

During the next few days he struggled over and over with that question, "Who is Jesus, Daddy?"

The following Sunday he insisted that everyone attend church... they were going to find out about this Jesus.

Afterwards they made an appointment with the pastor. He went to their home and answered their questions. As a result, both parents and children put their faith in Jesus Christ.

*What do you think about when you hear the name, "Jesus" ?*

A babe in a manger? An adult hanging on a cross?

Do different feelings stir within... guilt, joy, anger, peace?

Today we're going to take a closer look at Jesus.

Since this is part 2 of, **"This Year I Worship Christ at Christmas**, let's start reading at v. 15, and briefly review what we covered last week.

READ Colossians 1:15-17

I. Look at Jesus and See Your God (v. 15a)

When we look at Jesus, we see what God is like in attitude, words, actions, even feelings.

II. Look at Jesus and See Your Creator (v. 15b-17a)

Jesus made everything we see, from the vast universe to the smallest one-celled creature.

He also created everything that is invisible, from air to angels.

III. Look at Jesus and See Your Sustainer (v. 17b)

Not only did Jesus create everything, He keeps it going; He sustains it, He holds it together.

READ Colossians 1:18

IV. Look at Jesus and See Your Leader (v. 18)

A. The Leader of the Church (v. 18a)

v. 18a: "And He is the head of the body, the church;"

The word picture here is that the **Church** is called Jesus' **body**... and **Jesus** is called the **Head** of the body.

The "**body**," the "**church**," is the whole Body of Christ, the Church Universal... every person who has entrusted their life to Jesus Christ and surrendered to Him as the Ruler of their life.

This includes all Christian denominations, all Christian congregations, in all languages and nations and cultures.

This also makes Jesus the Leader of every individual Christian person.

What kind of leader is He? How does He lead the Church?

*He is the greatest there is! He is a model leader... for husbands, fathers, mothers, in business, in sports, at home, in the church.*

1. He is sacrificial: John 13:1a **"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father."**

Jesus knew he was to die a sacrificial death.

2. He is a secure leader: John 13:3 **"Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God;**

He was secure because He knew Who He was, He knew he was fully accepted by His Father, and that His reason for living was significant. He was secure.

3. He is a servant-leader: John 13:4-5 **so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist.**

**5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him."**

This was the job of the lowest servant in this culture... one who washed other's feet.

4. He speaks the truth: John 13:6-8 **"He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'**

**7 Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'**

**8 'No,' said Peter, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.'"**

He is strong enough to speak the truth. He won't say whatever it takes to get someone to follow Him. He's not a politician looking for votes. He is strong enough to speak the truth.

5. He leads by example: John 13:12-15 **"When He had**

finished washing their feet, He put on His clothes and returned to His place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' He asked them.

13 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am.

14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

Leaders set the example for those they lead.

Jesus is our ultimate Leader, our ultimate example, and fully worthy of our devotion in following Him.

Jesus is also:

B. The Leader of the new creation (v. 18b)

v. 18b: **He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead,**

**firstborn:** *refers to position and authority.*

In this case, it refers to Jesus as the first of the new creation: those who are resurrected from the dead, never to die again.

Jesus was not the first person to be raised from death: Lazarus, a widow's son, others...

... but He was the first to be raised from death Who would never have to die again.

And the same is true for those who believe in Him: we become new creations...

...we die physically, but never die spiritually... we will never experience the second death: the separation from God for all eternity.

So, Jesus is the firstborn, the Leader of the new creation.

C. The Leader over everything (v. 18c)

v. 18c: "so that in everything He might have the supremacy."

"supremacy:" "first place"

God put Jesus in first place over everything and everyone.

Everything points to Jesus!

Creation...

God the Father...

The Church...

Jesus is the Leader over all creation, over the church, over the dead, over the new creation. He is supreme!

And since Jesus is Leader over all, we are called to follow.

There's a song written by Paul Oakley entitled, "Jesus, Lover Of My Soul." The refrain expresses, so clearly, how Jesus is Head and Leader of the Church:

"It's all about You, Jesus.  
And all this is for You,  
for Your glory and Your fame.  
It's not about me,  
as if You should do things my way.  
You alone are God  
and I surrender to Your ways."

#### **IV. Look at Jesus and See Your Leader**

#### **V. Look at Jesus and See Your Open Door to Peace With God**

(v. 19-23)

**READ** v. 19-20

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

A man came back to work in a place where he had been fired several months previously. But, this time his work was

superior.

A fellow worker remembered how inconsistent he had been in the past and asked, "What happened to make such a difference in you?"

The man told this story: When I was in college I was part of a fraternity initiation committee. We placed the new members in the middle of a long stretch of a country road. I drove my car as fast as possible straight at them. The challenge was for them to stand firm until a signal was given to jump out of the way.

It was a dark night. I had reached one hundred miles an hour and saw their looks of terror in the headlights. The signal was given and everyone jumped clear -- except one boy.

I left college after that. I later married and have two children. But, the look on that boy's face as I passed over him at a hundred miles an hour stayed in my mind all the time. I became hopelessly inconsistent, moody, and finally became a problem drinker. My wife had to work to bring in the only income we had.

I was drinking at home one morning when someone rang the doorbell. I opened to find myself facing a woman who seemed strangely familiar.

She sat down in our living room and told me she was the mother of the boy I had killed years before. She said that she had hated me and spent agonizing nights rehearsing ways to get revenge.

I then listened as she told me of the love and forgiveness that had come when she gave her heart to Jesus Christ. She said, "I have come to let you know that I forgive you and I want you to forgive me."

I looked into her eyes that morning and I saw deep in her eyes the permission to be the kind of man I might have been had I never killed that boy. That forgiveness changed my whole life."

#### **V. Look at Jesus and See Your Open Door to Peace With God**

**READ    v. 19-20:    "For God was pleased to have all His**

**fullness dwell in Him (in Jesus),  
20 and through Him (Jesus) to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His (Jesus') blood, shed on the cross.**

The point of Jesus leaving eternity and coming to earth, becoming human, was to **reconcile** us to God; to make **peace** with God on our behalf.

The Son of God became human, and by living a perfect life, and then dying on our behalf, He paid the penalty for our rebelliousness against God.

And in this way, made it possible for us to have peace with God... and permission to become the kind of person we were created to be.

Now listen as he describes what a person's life is like before surrendering to Jesus as Leader:

**READ v. 21: "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior."**

"**enemies in your minds:**" we didn't want to submit our lives to God's ways, in fact, we insisted on living our own way.

And so, in our minds, we argued with God, we refused to surrender to Him, we refused to surrender our will to His and receive the forgiveness He offered through Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.

That was the past for those who now believe. It is the present for those who have not.

**READ v. 22: But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation -**

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have peace with God... the offense of sin has been removed, the guilt of past sin is gone, the penalty of sin is paid.

God says we become "**holy in His sight, without blemish**

**and free from accusation..."**

*Isn't it obvious how much God loves us?*

We didn't reconcile ourselves to God... there was nothing we could do to make up for our sins, and left to ourselves, we wouldn't even care to do so.

God had to provide the way for us,

God had to open our eyes to see the way,

God had to draw us to Himself,

God had to give us the faith to believe,

God had to provide the perfect sacrifice through His beloved Son,

He reconciled us... to Himself... everyone who has believed, everyone who will believe.

When we look at Jesus we see our open door to Peace with God... peace from the past and peace in the future.

### **CONCLUSION**

Christmas. It's about Jesus coming so we could have peace with God.

Merry Christmas!

*"Father in Heaven, thank You for sending Jesus. I accept for myself the price He paid for my sins. Please forgive me and continue to make Yourself real in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen."*