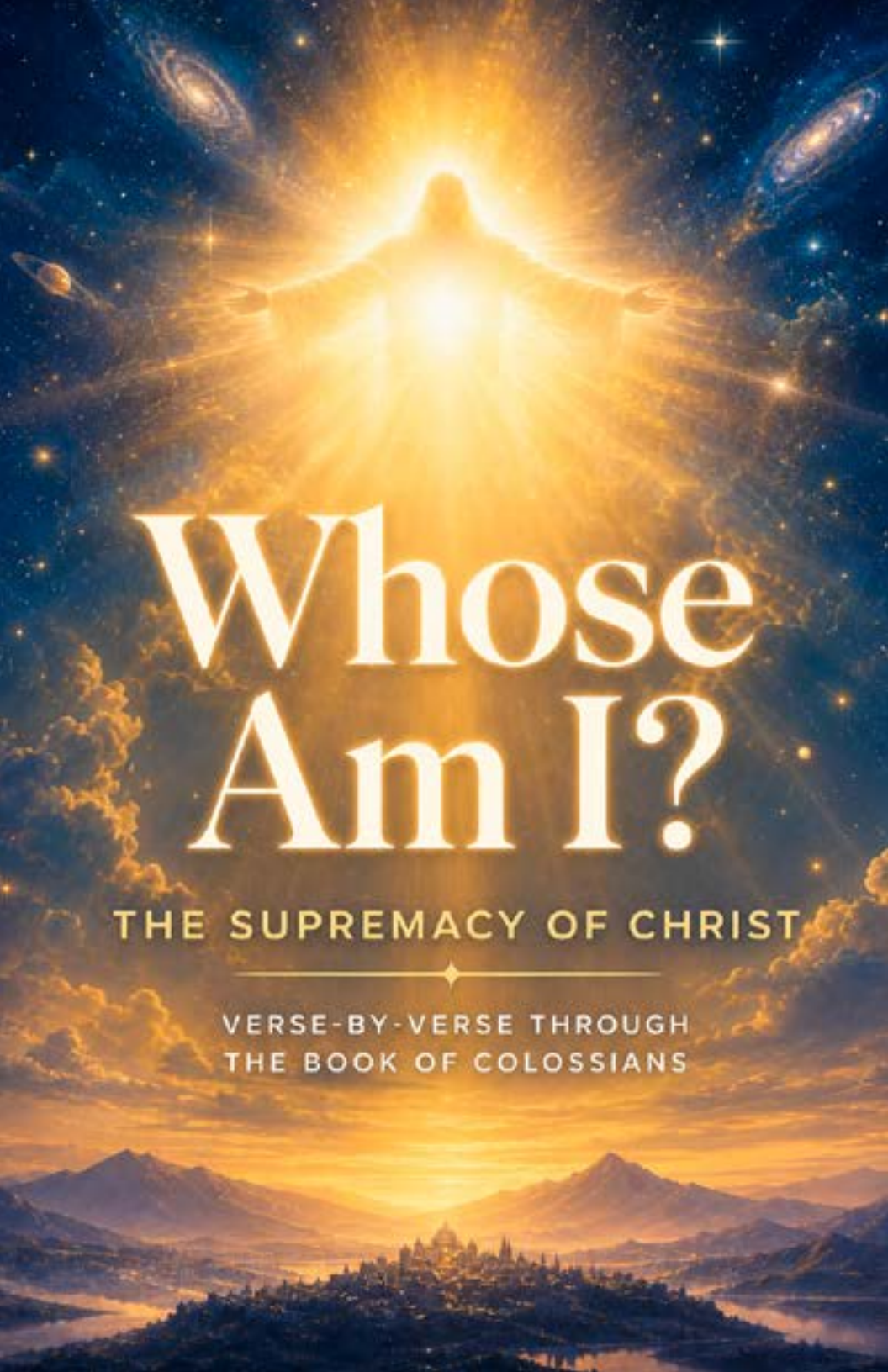




Whose Am I?

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

VERSE-BY-VERSE THROUGH
THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

WHOSE AM I? THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Verse-by-Verse Through the Book of Colossians



That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. (Psalm 26:7)

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... DELIVERED US



from the power of darkness,
and
TRANSLATED US
INTO THE KINGDOM

of
his dear Son, in whom we
HAVE REDEMPTION
THROUGH HIS BLOOD,
even the forgiveness of sins...

Colossians 1:13-14

Colossians Chapter 1

COLOSSIANS 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

Paul opens Colossians by establishing both his authority and his companionship. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God—not by self-appointment, personal ambition, or ecclesiastical promotion. Because the Colossians had likely never met Paul personally, that apostolic identification matters. He writes with divine commission, and therefore with divine authority.

Timothy is included in the greeting as Paul's beloved co-laborer and brother in the faith. Though Paul is the primary author, Timothy's presence reflects the unity and fellowship of gospel ministry. From the beginning, the letter reminds us that Christ-centered ministry is never about celebrity, but about faithful servants laboring together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:2

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul addresses the believers at Colossae as saints and faithful brethren in Christ. "Saints" speaks of their position: they have been set apart to God through Christ. "Faithful brethren" points

to their living response to that calling, as those who continue trusting Christ and walking with Him. As in Ephesians, identity comes before instruction. Before Paul tells them what to do or how to live, he reminds them who they are.

Grace and peace appear together again in Paul's greeting, and the order matters. Grace is the root of the gospel. Peace is the fruit of the gospel. We do not labor our way into peace with God. It comes because grace has already come from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian life always begins with what God has done, not with what man must do.

COLOSSIANS 1:3–8

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and brings forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: as you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Paul's first response to the Colossians is thanksgiving. Though he had likely not visited Colossae himself, he had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus and their love for all the saints. These are two of the great evidences of genuine conversion: faith directed upward toward Christ and love directed outward toward God's people. Paul also adds the third great Christian grace—hope. Faith, love, and hope stand together here as a beautiful trilogy of spiritual reality.

Their hope is laid up for them in Heaven. This means their lives are anchored beyond the present world. The gospel had come to them not merely as religious information, but as the

word of truth that bears fruit. Wherever the true gospel is received, it produces life, growth, and transformation. It does not merely inform the mind; it changes the heart.

Paul notes that they learned this gospel through Epaphras, whom he calls a dear fellowservant and a faithful minister of Christ. Epaphras had brought the gospel to them, and he had also reported back to Paul regarding their Spirit-given love. This affirms both the credibility of the message and the faithfulness of the messenger. God often uses ordinary, faithful servants to do eternally significant work.

COLOSSIANS 1:9–12

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Because the Colossians had believed the gospel, Paul does not stop at thanksgiving. He moves into intercession. He prays that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This is especially important in a letter written to confront false teaching that promised higher or deeper knowledge. Paul's answer to false knowledge is true knowledge—knowledge rooted in God's will, shaped by spiritual wisdom, and centered in Christ.

Paul's prayer is not merely to inform. He prays so that they may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. True doctrine leads to holy living. Spiritual understanding is

not complete until it produces a life that reflects the character and pleasure of Christ.

He also prays that they would be strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power. Yet the purpose of that strength is striking: not self-exaltation, but patience, longsuffering, and joyful endurance. This is one of the marks of genuine spiritual power. It is seen not merely in dramatic moments, but in the quiet ability to endure, to remain steady, and to do so with joy.

Paul closes this part of the prayer with thanksgiving to the Father, who has made believers fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We do not qualify ourselves for that inheritance. God qualifies us by His grace. The inheritance belongs to those who are in Christ, and the Father Himself has made us ready for it.

COLOSSIANS 1:13–14

Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

These verses give one of the clearest summaries of salvation in the New Testament. God has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Salvation is not merely moral improvement. It is a rescue, a transfer, and a complete change of realm. In Ephesians, Paul spoke of being “in Christ.” Here, in Colossians, he speaks of being “in the kingdom of Christ.” All people stand in one of two positions: 1. in Christ and in the kingdom of Christ, or 2. “in the world and in the dominion of darkness.” The believer has been rescued from the world and darkness and brought into the kingdom of light in Christ Jesus.

Paul then explains the basis of that transfer: in Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Re-

demption speaks of release by payment of a ransom. Christ's blood is the price that paid our sin debt and secured our liberty. Forgiveness means our sins have been truly pardoned, not overlooked, excused, or minimized--but paid for fully. This is not partial salvation. It is full deliverance grounded in the finished work of Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus, before taking His final breath, cried out, "It is finished."

COLOSSIANS 1:15–17

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Paul now rises into one of the highest Christological passages in all of Scripture. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. He is not merely like God, nor is He simply a reflection of God among many lesser beings. He is the visible manifestation of the invisible God, the exact revelation of the Father. To see Christ is to see the Father revealed.

He is also called the firstborn of every creature. This does not mean Christ is the first created being. In Scripture, "first-born" often speaks of rank, dignity, and preeminence rather than chronological birth. Paul's next words make that plain: by Him were all things created. Christ is not part of creation. He is from eternity past, and is the Creator of all things in Heaven and earth, visible and invisible, including every rank of angelic or spiritual authority.

All things were created by Him and for Him. Christ is not only the source of creation but also its purpose. The universe exists because of Him, through Him, and for Him. He is before all things, which speaks both of His eternal preexistence

and His supremacy. By Him all things consist, which means all things hold together. The One who created all things is also the One who sustains all things. The entire created order is upheld by the living Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:18–20

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Paul now moves from Christ's supremacy over creation to His supremacy over the church. He is the head of the body, the church. Ephesians speaks of the body, but Colossians tells of the supremacy of the Head. The church, as the body, is not sustained by human wisdom, personality, or programs. It derives its life, unity, and direction from Christ alone, the Head of the body.

Jesus is called the beginning and the firstborn from the dead. This means He is the source of the new creation and the first to rise from death and to receive a glorified resurrection body, never to die again. The purpose is clear: that in all things Jesus might have the preeminence. That is the theme of Colossians. Christ is not prominent among many spiritual options. He is preeminent over all.

Paul adds: it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. All the fullness of deity resides permanently in Christ. Nothing of God is lacking in Him. That truth directly strikes at every false teaching that tries to reduce Christ, supplement Christ, or place intermediaries between Christ and the believer.

Through the blood of His cross, Christ has made peace and will reconcile all things unto Himself. This does not mean uni-

versal salvation, but it does mean that the disorder brought by sin will finally be brought under Christ's righteous rule. The cross is the basis of both personal reconciliation and cosmic restoration. Peace with God begins at Calvary, and all things will ultimately be set in order and brought to perfect peace under the reign of Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:21–23

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: if you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

After soaring through Christ's cosmic supremacy, Paul brings the truth home personally: "And you." The Colossians were once alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works. That is the true condition of fallen man—estranged from God, hostile in heart, and opposed in conduct. But now, through the death of Christ in the body of His flesh, they have been reconciled.

The goal of this reconciliation is not merely relief from judgment, but to be presented before God as holy, unblameable, and unreprouable in His sight. This is positional truth (what is already true of us in Christ), which then shapes practical obedience (how we live). Paul is not teaching sinless perfection in practice, but complete acceptance in Christ. Because of Christ's finished work, the believer stands before God clothed in His righteousness.

The same gospel that rescues also establishes. Paul then speaks of continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel. This does not teach that per-

severance earns salvation. Rather, perseverance shows the reality of salvation. Martin Luther said, “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone.” Jesus will never leave or forsake us. Those who are truly in Christ remain anchored in Him; but we are prone to wander, so Paul warns, “be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...” False teaching tries to move believers away from the hope of the gospel, but Christ is sufficient, and those grounded in Him need no other foundation.

COLOSSIANS 1:24–25

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.

Having written of the supremacy of Christ over creation (1:15-17), over the church (1:18-20), over the lives of the Colossians (1:21-23), Paul now narrows the supremacy of Christ over his own life. He rejoices in his sufferings for the sake of the church. This does not mean Christ's atoning sufferings were incomplete. Jesus clearly declared, “It is finished.” What Paul means is that the ongoing afflictions borne by those united to Christ continue to display Christ's love and gospel witness in this present age. As the body suffers, the world sees the cost and beauty of belonging to the Head; and the strength He gives to endure suffering.

Paul's ministry is a stewardship given by God. He has been made a minister for the church, according to the dispensation or administration entrusted to him, particularly in making God's truth known among the Gentiles. Even suffering is interpreted through stewardship. Paul does not see himself as a victim of circumstances, but as a servant carrying out a divine assignment.

COLOSSIANS 1:26–27

Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul again introduces the word “mystery,” meaning a divine secret once hidden and now revealed. The Old Testament foretold Gentile blessing, but what was not previously revealed in full was this union of Jew and Gentile in one body, with Christ as the Head, and the Holy Spirit indwelling believers. That is part of the wonder of the church in this present age.

The heart of the mystery is breathtakingly simple and profound: Christ in you, the hope of glory. Not merely Christ with you, nor Christ helping you from a distance, but Christ *in* you. The indwelling Christ is the believer’s present life and future certainty. Because He is in us now, glory is not a wishful idea. It is the reality of a living hope grounded in union with Him.

COLOSSIANS 1:28–29

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

Paul sums up his ministry in one phrase: “Whom we preach.” The center of ministry is not a method, movement, or self-improvement system. It is Christ. Paul warns and teaches every man in all wisdom because his goal is to present every man mature, or complete, in Christ Jesus. Spiritual maturity is not found in secret knowledge, legal performance, or mystical experience. It is found in Christ alone.

Paul labors and strives toward that end, but he is careful to say

that his ministry is according to Christ's working, which works in him mightily. This is the secret of all true ministry. Paul is not relying on natural energy alone, but on divine power at work within him. The servant labors, but Christ supplies the strength. The ministry is demanding, but the sufficiency is always His.

CHAPTER EMPHASIS

Colossians 1 magnifies the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. He is supreme in the gospel, in redemption, in creation, in the church, in reconciliation, in the mystery, and in the ministry of His servants. The chapter calls believers to stand fast in the true gospel, reject every rival to Christ, and live in the fullness of what they already possess in Him. Christ is all, and He must have the preeminence in all things.

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