

*THE SUPREMACY & SUFFICIENCY OF
THE BELOVED SON*



This Jesus Is God!



King of kings & Lord of lords!

THE BELOVED SON IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

Colossians 1:15-20, Cf. Acts 1:10-11, John 1:1-18, 14:1-11, Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 1:1-3

1. THERE IS ONE JESUS SON OF GOD.

A. This Jesus Son of God who went up into the heavens will one day return in the same way.

- (Acts 1:10-11 ESV) And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”
- (John 3:16 ESV) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

B. This Jesus Son of God first came in humility and took on human flesh—born on Earth as a baby boy.

- (Philippians 2:5-8 ESV) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

C. This Jesus Son of God **had to come and literally share our humanity—our flesh and blood—so that through his death he might destroy the power of the devil.**

- (Hebrews 2:14 NLT) Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.
- (Hebrews 2:14-18 ESV) Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

***George Guthrie ... How, then, did the Son destroy the one having the power of death? The answer is “by his death.” From our broader Christian theology it would be natural to think of the resurrection as destroying the devil’s work, but that is not what the author has in mind here. The context suggests that the devil was undone and death’s bite rendered insipid by Christ’s death, specifically his sacrifice for sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:56). Since death was the prescription for victory in this case, the only way the Son could accomplish the needed task was to die, and the only way to die was to become human. This is, for our author, the logic of the Incarnation. [Guthrie, G. (1998). *Hebrews* (pp. 110-111). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

- (1 Corinthians 15:54-57 NLT) Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. 57 But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

D. This Jesus (God’s only Son) is the Jesus who returns—coming on the clouds in power and great glory.

- (Matthew 24:29-31 ESV) Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of

the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- (Philippians 2:9–11 ESV) Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- (Isaiah 45:22–23 ESV) Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. 23 By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: “To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.”
- (Romans 14:10–12 ESV) Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

2. THIS JESUS—GOD’S ONLY SON—IS THE BELOVED SON.

A. We have redemption in the Beloved Son.

- (Colossians 1:13–14 ESV) He has 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.
- (Matthew 3:16–17 ESV) And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, **“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”**
- (Matthew 17:4–5 ESV) And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5

He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, **“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;** listen to him.”

- (2 Peter 1:16–21 NLT) For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes 17 when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, **“This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”** 18 We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, 21 or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

3. THIS JESUS IS GOD.

A. The beloved Son is the visible image of the invisible God.

- (Colossians 1:15a ESV) **He is the image of the invisible God.**
- (Hebrews 1:3 ESV) He is the radiance of the glory of God and **the exact imprint of his nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
- (John 1:14 ESV) And **the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- (John 14:8–11 ESV) Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am

in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

B. The beloved Son is the firstborn of all creation—the surpassing, foremost, supreme, most prominent human Person in all of creation.

- (Colossians 1:15b ESV) ... the firstborn of all creation.
- (Romans 8:29 ESV) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be **the firstborn** among many brothers.
- (Hebrews 1:5–6 ESV) For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? 6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”
- (Revelation 1:5 ESV) And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

C. All things were created by, through and for the beloved Son.

- (Colossians 1:16 ESV) For **by him** all things were 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**.
- (Hebrews 1:2 ESV) But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
- (John 1:2–3 ESV) He was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things were made through him**, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- (John 1:10 ESV) He was in the world, and **the world was made through him**, yet the world did not know him.

D. The beloved Son is first—preeminent—in everything.

- (Colossians 1:17a ESV) And he is before all

things.

- (Ephesians 1:21–23 ESV) **Far above all** rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put **all things under his feet** and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

E. In the beloved Son all things hold together.

- (Colossians 1:17b ESV) ... and in him all things hold together.
- (Hebrews 1:3a ESV) He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power**.

F. The beloved Son is the head of the church.

- (Colossians 1:18a ESV) And **he is the head of the body, the church**.
- (Ephesians 5:23–24 ESV) For the husband is the head of the wife even **as Christ is the head of the church, his body**, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

G. The beloved Son is the beginning fruit—the firstborn fruit of the resurrection—so that in everything he is preeminent.

- (Colossians 1:18b ESV) **He is the beginning**, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
- (Revelation 1:5 ESV) And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

H. The beloved Son is God—in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

- (Colossians 1:19 ESV) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.
- (Philippians 2:5–6 ESV) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though **he was in the form of God**, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.
- (Hebrews 1:3 ESV) He is the radiance of the glory of God and **the exact imprint** of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the

word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

I. God reconciled all things to himself by the beloved Son—making peace by the blood of the cross.

- (Colossians 1:20 ESV) And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross.**
- (Ephesians 2:12–14 ESV) Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been **brought near by the blood of Christ.** 14 **For he himself is our peace,** who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.
- (Ephesians 2:16–17 ESV) And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 **And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.**
- (John 14:27 ESV) **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.** Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
- (John 16:33 ESV) I have said these things to you, **that in me you may have peace.** In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
- (Romans 5:1 ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- (Hebrews 13:20–21 ESV) **Now may the God of peace** who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, **through Jesus Christ,** to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY ... Paul used the word image to make this fact clear. It means “an exact representation

and revelation.” The writer to the Hebrews affirms that Jesus Christ is “the express image of His Person” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus was able to say, “He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). **In His essence, God is invisible; but Jesus Christ has revealed Him to us (John 1:18). Nature reveals the existence, power, and wisdom of God; but nature cannot reveal the very essence of God to us. It is only in Jesus Christ that the invisible God is revealed perfectly. Since no mere creature can perfectly reveal God, Jesus Christ must be God.** [*Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2, p. 116). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.*]

1:15 **Two assertions set the direction for the entire discussion.** They are: “He is the image of the invisible God,” and “[He is] the firstborn over all creation.” **Two important matters emerge** from the first assertion: the idea of the image of God and how the image is a revelation of God. In the Greek world, the word “image” (eikōn) conveyed one of two nuances of meaning. Both elements were always present, but one tended to dominate the other. The first is that of representation. The image represented and symbolized what the object pictured. This usage occurred often in the contexts of an image on a coin or a reflection in a mirror. **If this emphasis were primary, Paul would have said Jesus was the symbol of deity. Paul would have meant that Jesus exactly symbolized God.**

The second element of meaning in the word “image” (eikōn) was manifestation. When the term was employed, it meant that the symbol was more than a symbol. The symbol brought with it the actual presence of the object. Thus J. B. Phillips translated it, “visible expression,” **and by it Paul meant that Jesus brought God into the human sphere of understanding.** He manifested God. The terminology is similar to Hebrews 1:3, where the writer stated that Jesus is called the “exact representation” of God, and John 1:18, which states that Jesus “has made him known.” **The point is that in Christ the invisible God became visible. He shared the same substance as God and made God’s character known in this earthly sphere of existence. The revelation of God in Christ is such that we can actually see him, even with all of our limitations.** [*Melick, R. R. (1991). Philipians, Colossians, Philemon (Vol. 32, pp. 214–215). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.*]

In Romans, Paul insists that “since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen,

being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). **As God’s representation and representative, Christ brings clarity to our hazy notions of the immortal, invisible God, who lives in unapproachable light** (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16). In Christ we see who God is—Creator and Redeemer; what God is like—a God of mercy and love; and what God does—one who sends his Son to rescue people from the dominion of darkness and brings about the reconciliation of all creation through his death on a cross. [Garland, D. E. (1998). *Colossians and Philemon* (p. 87). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

Although prōtotokos can mean firstborn chronologically (Luke 2:7), it refers primarily to position, or rank. In both Greek and Jewish culture, the firstborn was the son who had the right of inheritance. He was not necessarily the first one born. Although Esau was born first chronologically, it was **Jacob who was the “firstborn” and received the inheritance.** Jesus is the One with the right to the inheritance of all creation (cf. Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 5:1–7, 13). [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 46). Chicago: Moody Press.]

The first clue: the connection between THE SUPREMACY and THE SUFFICIENCY of Christ.

It is often said that the theme of the Colossian epistle is the pre-eminence of Christ. He is supreme in authority over all things, as expressed in verses 15–18. But this confession that Christ is the true Lord of all is the essential foundation of all Christian discipleship. We must assume therefore that, in principle, the church at Colossae was built on this foundation since no other foundation for such wise building exists.

So it would be truer to say that the theme of this letter is the sufficiency, or adequacy, of Christ as Saviour. This means that no other spiritual power whatsoever is necessary to bring to mankind God’s full and final salvation. What was happening in Colossae was that the Christians seemed ready to deny the sufficiency of Christ for all their spiritual needs, and therefore, in practice, to deny the supremacy of Christ to which they were already committed.

It is for this reason that Paul drives home the lesson that just because Christ is the supreme Lord he must be a sufficient Saviour. He urges the Colossians to remember who Christ is. On such a basis he then calls upon them to recognize what such

a Christ does for them (with implied astonishment that they should look anywhere other than Christ). [Lucas, R. C. (1980). *Fullness & freedom: the message of Colossians & Philemon* (pp. 46–47). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

To understand the word of the truth—the gospel ... and to understand the grace of God in truth, we must understand the supremacy and sufficiency of our Savior—the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the lesson of Colossians. Our hope laid up for us in heaven comes down to the redemptive power of our Savior.

- (Colossians 1:5–6 ESV) Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

The Gospel According to Job ...

For in the gospel according to Job a person is either righteous, or not. One cannot be a little bit righteous any more than one can be a little bit pregnant. Either one’s sin is completely forgiven (including not just sinful behavior but the innate sinfulness of the heart) or it is not.

If God accepts us at all, He accepts us wholeheartedly, and He covers us completely with the spotless robe of righteousness. This robe of divine acceptance does not come in gray, but only in dazzling white, and one either has the robe or not. One is either righteous or wicked. And anyone who is wicked can have that status quickly amended by a trip to the cross.

[Mike Mason. *The Gospel According to Job* (Kindle Locations 214-220). Kindle Edition.]