

OPTIMUS PRIME, COL.1:15-23

The Supremacy of Christ #2

◆Intro: Prime: “of first importance.” Example: “Her prime concern was to hide her diary inside the jello before it had fully congealed.”

◆Prime: “of best possible quality.” Example: “Honey, now this is really prime rib! Did you really make this or is your mother hiding somewhere in the house?”

◆Optimum: “most conducive to favorable outcome.” Example: “This is optimum snow fall for good skiing!”

◆Optimus: latin root for “best”.

◆Now let me tell you a story some of you may be familiar with. Younger folks know it as the tale of the Transformers: cars and trucks that are somehow living creatures, powerful robots that have compassionate hearts and want to protect mankind and earth for other such living robots that are evil. They hide disguised in machine form but can transform into human-like beings. I’d like you to briefly meet their leader...

◆[play movie clip of Optimus Prime...]

◆Optimus Prime: the best, of first importance and best possible quality, most conducive to favorable outcome. It strikes me that this is a good description of ...God! Particularly, of Christ.

◆The Colossian congregation to which Paul wrote our text, was a first century church facing inroads of a heresy like that of the gnostic teaching that minimized the place of Christ in their faith. Knowledge (gnosis) was held up as the supreme savior, not unlike our modern mantra that thinks “education” is the answer to all our human struggles. Paul jumps at the chance to remind them that education is

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not their savior. That there is an Optimus Prime, a main event, a central personhood and maker of all things.

◆(lets read the text...)

◆1. Christ reigns supreme in every sphere. v16

◆A. Paul leaves no doubt here about Jesus' rank over the created reality around us. (v15) In the Third Century a bishop by the name of Arius was declared a heretic because he taught that this verse meant Jesus was "created" and therefore not equal to God. Today, Jehovah's Witnesses follow the exact same heresy. But that is not at all what Paul is saying.

◆Paul is saying that Christ reigns supreme in the cosmic order.

◆1) "firstborn": this can mean "first child", but it often means "first in rank or honor." The Torah, for example, is referred to as the "firstborn", ie, the highest authority. The people of Israel as a whole were called the firstborn, although many nations existed before them, to indicate the high position given them by God.

◆2) Our context also clearly makes Jesus creator! (16). It clearly labels him preexistent (17). And it clearly makes him equal with the Father (2:9). Furthermore, he wasn't the actual first human ever raised from the dead (18), so what does Paul mean by that? Elisha's bones revived a dead soldier in the Old Testament. Jesus himself raised Tabitha, the son of the widow at Nain, and Lazarus all back to life from the dead. So "firstborn" here clearly refers to first in rank, the "most important" of all resurrection. The Optimus Prime. Without Jesus' resurrection, there would be no eternal resurrection of any

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human. Jesus is in fact the power, the cosmic power behind the reality of life itself!

◆ Lets go on a little astronomical exercise: We're heading into space.

First, we're going to cover great distances so inches, feet, yards and even miles won't do for measuring. Light travels at 186000 mps. Traveling at that speed for one year, you would cross a distance of 5.88 trillion miles.

(The only time we talk in numbers like this is when some president wants to spend more money!) Trillion! So scientists use a ruler that is 5.88 trillion miles long to measure God's universe. They call it a "light year" ("to infinity and beyond! Go Buzz).

◆ Scientist say that our planet, in our solar system spins around our sun, one small star in a galaxy of stars called the Milky Way that is 100,000 light years in diameter! So for example, if the Milky Way was the size of North America, our whole solar system with it's nine planets would be a tea cup in a New Jersey diner. From our vantage point in our galaxy of stars, we can see other galaxies. Lets travel.

◆ Stop 1: the **Sun** (photo). Traveling at the speed of light it will take us 8 minutes to reach our sun crossing a span of 93 million miles.

The sun is 109 times the size of the earth. It's a raging ball of fire, 10,000° F.

◆ Stop 2: Now we're going to put some miles on. 440 light years.

We're warp-speeding at 186,000 mps until we age 440 years old and we'll come to this. **Pleiades** (photo) star cluster. It's actually mentioned in the Bible. God casually mentions it in the book of Job.

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“Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion?” Job 38:31

- ◆ Stop 3: 1000 light years. **Vela Pulsar** (photo). A star, we think, that explodes in a super nova, and then collapses in on itself to form a pulsar. Aim a radio-magnetic telescope at the Vela Pulsar and you can hear it oscillating 11 times/sec.
- ◆ Stop 4: 8000 light years from here. Feeling grey and wrinkly yet? This is the **Hour Glass Nebula** (photo). (a nebula is a cloud of gases and dust) But just look at it's shape!
- ◆ Stop 5: now we take a huge step, as though our others weren't, and we jump to 28 million light years of distance. The **Sombrero Galaxy** (photo). A whole galaxy of stars spanning a distance of 50,000 light years itself!
- ◆ Stop 6: 31 million light years. The **Whirlpool Galaxy** (photo) (the inspiration for the washing machine). Made up of 300-500 billion stars. We think the pink stuff is stars being born. Scientists estimate that stars are being born every second! Now, the Hubble telescope has gotten us a close up picture of the core of the Whirlpool Galaxy. It's called the “x”. Take a look at the **Core...** (photo)
- ◆ Now I don't know about you, but it sure reminds me of this! (show photo of **Cross**). 31 million light years out in space just sitting there saying, I think, the same thing Paul was telling the Colossian Christians: Jesus reigns supreme!
- ◆ Everything we've looked at just now and thought about, Jesus made! Do you understand how important Jesus is? How huge and great Jesus is?

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How he shrunk it all down into a six foot Galilean I cannot explain, but that he did should make you tremble in awe! Please, lets not act like Jesus is some nice dude who taught some loving things a while back. That's not what Christianity is saying. We worship this person, Amen!?

◆B. Christ is supreme in the Church. v18 I'm going to say more in point three on this so I'll skip it for now.

◆C. Christ is supreme in the celestial realm. v16, 20 Note the phrase "*things on earth and things in heaven*".

◆This is the same thing Paul talks about in his letter to the Ephesian church. (Eph.6:12) In Jewish literature there are four classes of angelic powers: demons, angels, powers, and forces. They do wield power, but keep in mind, Jesus is not *one* of them. He is Optimus Prime. He is *over them*. He is *ruler* of the kings of the earth.

◆"*That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,*" Ephesians 1:19-22, NIV.

◆I hope you can catch a feeling for the size and importance of Christ. An in the words of Louie Giglio, I'm not trying to make you feel small here today.... You are small. And God is Great! And Jesus is supreme in all things. Now lets think about some implications of this.

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◆2. I must not put Christ in my little church box.

◆Jesus cannot be boxed up, or closed in, or relegated to a little piece of life. He is not one of many lesser gods. He does not only hang around church buildings. I don't care what the mixed up court system says, the Christian faith is not some private affair. When are we Christians going to stand up and living what we claim is the truth? Why are you not bringing up what Jesus says in the context of your country? Either he made the cosmos or he did not! And if he did, then what he says about it needs to be heard!

◆Why is it that when we're playing volleyball or softball, we think we'd better just keep the Jesus stuff to ourselves and be normal?

◆Why is it that we go to parties and graduations and maybe have the pastor say a "word of prayer", and then we drink and dance to songs that would offend the majesty of heaven. But it's OK, we prayed first. We can put Jesus away now.

◆**A.** Orange juice isn't just for morning breakfast and Christ isn't just for Sunday morning. If Christ is the cosmic ruler, then all realms of existence fall under his rule. It is a fallacy to think that someone from whom all things are, and to whom all things are, and by whom all things are, is not then for things like government, or politics, or law, or education. It is a fallacy to think that the 800,000 catalogued kinds of insects with billions in some species do not speak of or point toward him! It would be lamentable not to notice that knotty pine is his invention, or that quantum physics reflects his mind!

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◆v23 reads *“This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven”*. I’m going to have to disagree with the NIV here. Lets look at the NASB.

◆ *the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, ” Colossians 1:23, NASB.*

◆The original Greek term here (“en”) means “in” or “by” as in verse 16: “in (greek: “en”) him all things were created”. It’s not that the Gospel is being told to every creature. It’s that every creature is a telling of the gospel, God’s truth! Paul’s point is that every created thing points to it’s maker, Jesus. He wrote the same thing to the church at Rome.

◆*“Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news--the Good News about Christ. But what about the Jews? Have they actually heard the message? Yes, they have: “The message of God’s creation has gone out to everyone, and its words to all the world.”” Romans 10:17, 18, NLT.*

◆He’s quoting Psalm 19 there, which says, *“The heavens are telling the glories of God. The skies proclaim his handi-work ...There is no language where their voice is not heard!”*

◆Some religions say that the spiritual is good, the physical is bad. Some say that the physical is all there is, and the spiritual is a dream. The Bible says Christ rules both.

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◆B. Christ is the hope of any nation. Christ is supreme even over those who do not acknowledge him. Listen to how Scripture links the truth of the Christian faith to the very existence of the created globe!

◆*“The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” Romans 8:19-22, NIV.*

◆Now if this is so, then a God-follower cannot sit around and accept a separation of his faith from his state. He cannot accept the mindlessness that would claim morality cannot be legislated, or that religion cannot enter governance. Of course it can, and it must. Legislation’s job is to uphold morality in people who while they are capable of understanding it, so often chose against it.

◆If this is so, the the God-follower cannot act wildly and foolishly with the rest of creation. Christ rules it as well, and as his servants, we must care for it, recycle it, manage it well.

◆One more thing.

◆3. **I must not miss Christ in my church.**

◆A. Did you know that you can be a church attender but not a God lover? Did you know that you can study the Bible and not know the author? Put it this way? When was the last time you and Jesus Christ talked to each other? And, may we ask, what did he tell you? Or doesn’t that happen in

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your life? Because if you are not experiencing what I'm talking about, then how do you know Christ is a real person?

◆ You see, the church does not exist to give people nice, religious things to do so they can make up for some bad things they do. The church does not exist so that everyone has a place where they get to sing their favorites.

The church exists to help you meet with God.

◆ And God is not an idea. He is not a tradition. He is not myth meant to deepen your personal meaning. He is a person. And he has feelings about you. Hear it, friends! Jesus is what we're about. No, Jesus is who we're about! Jesus is why we gathered here today. We want to talk with him. We want to hear from him. We want to hear from you God, we are here for you. ...

◆ **Conclusion:** This star naming creator, this power that sources the solar fires, this designer of the Whirlpool Galaxy with a cross in its light pattern, this God is a being, a person. And this person chose to place his prized creations of all 31 million light years across space from that remarkable group of stars, and on a tiny planet, 1 of 9 circling a relatively minuscule star we call our sun. Those creations are you. And do you know why he did it?

◆ *"For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our rebellious acts as far away from us as the east is from the west. The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he understands how weak we are; he knows we are only dust." Psalms 103:11-14, NLT.*

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◆What can we say but what Paul says in his letter to the Romans?

◆“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?” “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.” Romans 11:33-36, NIV.