

## INTRODUCTION.

WE ARE CONTINUING TO MAKE OUR WAY THROUGH COL. ~ 1: ~ 15-20, ~ Paul's discussion ~ about the Person and work of Jesus.

▶▶ As we are well aware by now, ~ Col. ~ 1: ~ 15-20 ~ is one of the most, ~ if not the most, ~~ conclusive passages on the Person and work of Jesus in all of Scripture.

RECALL PAUL'S PURPOSE FOR ADDING THIS DISCUSSION.

▶▶ False teachers in Colossae ~ were assaulting and misrepresenting ~ the Person and work of Christ.

▶▶ So, ~ in order to counter this attack and falsification of Jesus' Person and work, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul lays out 10 sweeping and profound assertions which set the record straight.

OF COURSE, ~ FALSE TEACHERS WERE NOT RESTRICTED TO THE FIRST CENTURY.

▶▶ They have plagued the church throughout her history. ~~ And it's no different today.

▷▷ In his second epistle, ~ Peter writes, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ But false prophets also arose among the people, ~ just as there will be false teachers among you. ⇨⇨ 1<sup>st</sup> century. ~~ But applies to every gen. of believers.

▶▶ And false teachers ~ are still attacking and distorting the biblical teaching about the Person and work of Jesus.

SO FAR, ~ WE HAVE LOOKED AT THE FIRST 3 ASSERTIONS ABOUT JESUS. ¶¶ 1/13

▶▶ Jesus is the visible expression of the invisible God. ~ He is supreme over all creation. ~ And he is the sovereign Creator of the universe.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL CONSIDER THE FOURTH AND FIFTH ASSERTIONS.

THE FOURTH ASSERTION. ~ VERSE 17a.

HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS.

▶▶ I.e., ~ as we'll see as we unpack this, ~ Jesus is eternal.

"BEFORE" REFERS TO JESUS' PREEXISTENCE. ~ I.E., ~ JESUS PREEXISTED ALL THINGS.

▶▶ But not in the sense of being created first, ~ as the heretics were teaching.

▷▷ And in our day, ~ cults like the JW's teach.

▶▶ Notice how Paul words this. ~ he ~ is ~ before all things.

▷▷ Not, ~ "he ~ was ~ before all things."

▶▶ The form of the Greek verb for ~ "is" ~ indicates ~ eternal existence, ~ an attribute of deity.

▶▶ Mere preexistence, ~ i.e., ~ created before everything else, ~ could have been set forth with the verb ~ "was."

▷▷ However, ~ the text states that ~ Jesus is before all things, ~ not that He was before all things.

▷▷ This verb structure can refer ~ only ~ to God. ↴ 2/13

## PAUL MAKES THE POINT CLEARLY.

▶▶ Jesus is eternal, ~ and therefore God, ~ since only God is eternal.

JN. ~ 8: ~ 56-58, ~ SHOWS US THAT JESUS HIMSELF ~ WAS ALSO QUITE CLEAR ON this matter.

▶▶ Speaking to the Jews, ~ He said, ~ ¶¶

▷▷<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. ~ He saw it and was glad."  
~~<sup>57</sup> So the Jews said to him, ~ "You are not yet fifty years old, ~ and have you seen Abraham?" ~ ¶¶

↳↳<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, ~ "Truly, ~ truly, ~ I say to you, ~ before Abraham was, ~ I am ~ [notice: ~ not I was]."

▶▶ Phrase, ~ "I am" ~ implies continuous existence, ~ including existence when Abraham lived.

▶▶ By using the timeless ~ "I am" ~ rather than ~ "I was," ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Jesus conveyed not only the idea of existence ~ prior to Abraham, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but timelessness, ~ eternity, ~ the very nature of God Himself.

▶▶ And the Jews did not miss his claim of being God.

▷▷ Verse 59, ~ So they picked up stones to throw at him, ~ but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

▷▷ They knew exactly who he was claiming to be: ~ Yahweh.

▶▶ Moses and the burning bush. ¶¶ 3/13

▶▶Pick it up with Ex. ~ 3: ~ 13-14.

▷▷<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, ~ "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ~ 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' ~ and they ask me, ~ 'What is his name?' ~ what shall I say to them?" ~ <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, ~ "I am who I am." ~ And he said, ~ "Say this to the people of Israel: ~ 'I am has sent me to you.'"

▶▶Certainly the Jews did not miss the reference to this incident ~ ¶¶

▷▷and the clear claim by Jesus that he is the One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush.

↳↳They picked up stones to throw at him. ~ Accused of blasphemy. ~ Stoning was the punishment for this sin.

▶▶Jesus may also have been alluding to Is. ~ 45: ~ 18 ~ LEB.

▷▷For thus says Yahweh, ~ who created the heavens, ~ he is God, ~ who formed the earth and who made it. ~ He himself established it; ~ he did not create it as emptiness — he formed it for inhabiting. ~ "I am Yahweh ~ and there is none besides me."

## THE APOSTLE JOHN WAS QUITE CLEAR ON THIS AS WELL.

▶▶John begins his gospel with, ~ "In the beginning was the Word."

▶▶Phrase, ~ "In the beginning" ~ means in effect ~ "before creation began."

▷▷"Before the universe was created, ~ the Word was."

↳↳The Word is said to already exist before creation began.

▶▶John does not say, ~ "Before the universe was created, ~ the Word began."

▷▷IOW, ~ John is not saying that Jesus was the first-created, ~ ¶¶

↳↳and then the rest of the universe was created, ~ like the heretics claimed, ~ and JW's today claim. ¶¶ 4/13

▶▶ But rather, ~ John declares, ~ "Before the universe was created, ~ the Word was."

▶▶ The verb form for "was" signifies ~ timeless existence.

▷▷ We could express the idea this way: ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "Before the universe was created, ~ the Word was already eternally existing."

▶▶ We know from John's gospel that ~ "the Word" ~ is Jesus.

▶▶ John is saying ~ that before the universe was created, ~ Jesus was already eternally existing.

▷▷ No matter how far back one goes, ~ Jesus was continuously existing.

▷▷ Jesus had no origin, ~ no beginning. ~ ~ His humanity had a beginning, ~ but not his divine Person.

## AND THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS WAS EQUALLY CLEAR.

▶▶ In [verse 8a](#) of [chapter 1](#), ~ the writer of Hebrews begins a series of OT quotations.

▶▶ The preface to those statements is, ~ "But of the Son he says."

▶▶ Consequently, ~ the statements to follow refer to Jesus.

▶▶ Therefore, ~ the statement in [vs. 8b](#), ~ "Your throne, O God, ~ is forever and ever," ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is a reference to the eternity of Christ.

## THE PROPHET MICAH IS ALSO CLEAR ON JESUS' ETERNITY. ¶¶ 5/13

▶▶ In predicting that the Messiah, ~ who is Jesus, ~ would be born in Bethlehem, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Micah said that the Messiah's "goings forth are from long ago, ~ from the days of eternity."

▷▷ Although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, ~~ that was not His beginning. ~~ He has existed "from the days of eternity."

THERE IS INDIRECT SCRIPTURAL PROOF FOR JESUS' ETERNALITY AS WELL.

AT LEAST FOUR TIMES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL THERE IS A REFERENCE TO JESUS' HAVING "descended from heaven."

▶▶ If Jesus came down from heaven, ~ then Bethlehem cannot have been his beginning.

▶▶ These verses indicate he dwelt in heaven before coming to earth, ~ pointing to his eternity.

REFERRING TO JESUS, ~ JOHN WRITES, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him." (Jn. 12)

▶▶ In the context of John, ~ this is a reference to Jesus.

▶▶ However, ~ John was quoting from Is. ~ 6: ~ 10, ~ where Isaiah was clearly referring to Yahweh.

▶▶ Recall that Is. 6 records Isaiah's vision of Yahweh. ~~ Remember how that begins.

▷▷ In the year that King Uzziah died ~ I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, ~ high and lifted up; ~~ and the train of his robe filled the temple. ¶¶ 6/13

▶▶ John, ~ in his gospel, ~ thus equates Jesus with Yahweh.

▷▷ Because Yahweh is eternal ~ then Jesus, ~ being Yahweh, ~ is eternal.

IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, ~ YOU CAN READ IT IN MATT. 22, ~ JESUS QUOTES PS. 110:1.

▶▶ The Lord said to my Lord, ~ "Sit at my right hand, ~ until I put your enemies under your feet."

▶▶ And he applies it to himself.

▶▶ The term "Lord" ~ is Adonai, ~ one of the Old Testament names of God.

▶▶ If Christ is designated Adonai, ~ and he is, ~ then He is eternal, ~ for God is eternal.

BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT PROOF.

▶▶ The scriptural evidence for Jesus' eternity is extensive.

OK, LET'S CATCH OUR BREATH.

FALSE TEACHERS IN COLOSSAE ~ WERE ASSAULTING AND MISREPRESENTING ~ THE Person and work of Christ.

▶▶ So, ~ in order to counter this attack and falsification of Jesus' Person and work, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul lays out 10 sweeping and profound assertions which set the record straight.

↪↪ And we have just finished the 4<sup>th</sup> statement: ~ Jesus is eternal.

NOW LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE FIFTH ASSERTION ABOUT THE PERSON & work of Jesus. ¶¶ 7/13

VERSE 17b. ~~ BY HIM ~ [I.E., ~ IN JESUS] ~ ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER.

▶▶ Could be paraphrased as, ~ "Jesus holds all creation together."

▶▶ Not only is Jesus the Creator of all things, ~ all things continue to exist because of him.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ "hold together" ~ implies ~ ¶¶

▷▷ being held together in a coherent or logical way, ~ sustained and upheld, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ under control, ~ prevented from dissolving into disorder and confusion.

▶▶ Jesus keeps the cosmos ~ from becoming a chaos.

▶▶ Without him, ~ electrons would not continue to circle nuclei, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ gravity would cease to work, ~ the planets would not stay in their orbits.

▶▶ Jesus is the one ~ who makes the sun shine.

▷▷ He is the one ~ who causes the earth to rotate on its axis and orbit the sun.

▷▷ Jesus is the one ~ who continues to grant life to our bodies.

↳↳ As Paul told the Athenians ~ Acts 17, ~ in God "we live and move and exist."

↳↳ Our very creation and continued existence depends on Jesus. ¶¶ 8/13



HEBREWS 1:3b IS A PARALLEL VERSE TO COL. 1:17b, ~ AND TELLS US HOW JESUS holds all things together.

▶▶he ~ i.e., ~ Jesus, ~ upholds the universe by the word of his power.

▶▶By His mighty word He called the universe into existence.

▷▷And he upholds the universe by the power of his word.

▶▶It is ~ Jesus' powerful word ~ that keeps the earth spinning on its axis.

▷▷It is his almighty word ~ that keeps it revolving around the sun.

▷▷It is by his powerful word ~ that "we live and move and exist."

FROM WHAT HAS BEEN SAID, ~ HERE ARE TWO SIMPLE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR lives.

▶▶1<sup>st</sup>, ~ we ought to be extremely grateful to our Savior.

▷▷Every day we live, ~ every breath we take, ~ every rotation of the earth, ~ ¶¶

↳↳every trip around the sun, ~ is a gift from our loving, ~ gracious, ~ and merciful Lord.

▶▶2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ when we consider our Savior's awesome power, ~ ¶¶

▷▷it should boost ~ our trust in him ~ and our confidence in his promises.

▷▷He spoke the universe into existence.

▷▷And he holds it together and causes it to run smoothly. ¶¶ 9/13

▷▷ Surely he has the power to meet our needs, ~ 77

↳↳ to see us through all the storms, ~ trials, ~ and tragedies of life, ~ 77

→→ and to bring us safely into his heavenly kingdom.

▷▷ Immediately following Jesus' ascension, ~ 77

↳↳ two angels appeared and told the disciples that Jesus would return.

→→ Surely no earthly or demonic power can prevent this from happening.

## JESUS HOLDS ALL CREATION TOGETHER BY THE POWER OF HIS MIGHTY WORD.

▶▶ I read of a group of people who toured an atomic laboratory.

▷▷ The guide explained how all matter was composed of rapidly moving electric particles.

▷▷ The group studied models of molecules ~ and were amazed to learn that matter is made up primarily of space.

▷▷ During the question period, ~ one of the group asked, ~ 77

↳↳ "If this is the way matter works, ~ what holds it all together?"

→→ For that, ~ the guide had no answer.

▶▶ Everyone one of us in this room knows how gravity works.

▷▷ However, ~ according to Prof. John Lennox, ~ Newton's law of gravitation doesn't tell us what gravity is.

▷▷ No one knows what it is. 11 10/13

▶▶ What's more, ~ it's a puzzle why the nucleus of an atom holds together.

▷▷ According to Coulomb's law of electrostatic force and the law of magnetism, ~ atoms shouldn't hold together.

↪↪ They should fly apart. ~~ But they don't.

▷▷ Experiments performed in the 1920s and 1930s ~ ¶¶

↪↪ gave scientists an understanding ~ ¶¶

→→ of the incredibly powerful force that holds protons together within the nucleus of an atom.

▷▷ Scientists have dubbed that force ~ the "strong nuclear force," ~ ¶¶

↪↪ but have no explanation ~ for why it exists.

▶▶ Well, ~ Paul and the author of Hebrews ~ give us the explanation ~ and the answer to that person's question: ~~ Jesus.

THAT JESUS NOT ONLY CREATED THE UNIVERSE ~ BUT ALSO UPHOLDS IT, ~ SHOWS us that Jesus is very much active in the universe.

▶▶ He did not simply ~ start things off ~ and then withdrew from his creation, ~ like Deism teaches.

▷▷ Deism is essentially the view that God exists, ~ but that He is not directly involved in the world.

▷▷ Deism pictures God ~ as the great "clockmaker" ~ who created the clock, ~ wound it up, ~ and let it go.

▶▶ Jesus ~ continues to sustain ~ and is very much active in ~ the universe. ¶¶ 11/13

## JESUS IS ALSO VERY ACTIVE IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE.

▶▶ We see his activity in the lives of his people from what God says through Isaiah (41).

▶▶ Yahweh tells us to fear not and to not be dismayed.

▷▷ Why? ~~ Because he tells us that he is with us and that he is our God.

▶▶ Then the Lord tells us what he means by that.

▷▷ He promises to be with us, ~ to help us, ~ 77

↪↪ and to hold on to us by his righteous right hand.

## FURTHERMORE, ~ JESUS IS VERY ACTIVE IN HUMAN HISTORY.

▶▶ Everything that takes place is subject to His sovereignty and authority.

▶▶ In fact, ~ He orchestrates everything to bring about the Father's divine sovereign plan.

▷▷ And that is, ~ as Paul points out in Eph., ~ 77

↪↪ to unite all things in [Jesus], ~ things in heaven and things on earth.

▶▶ God the Father planned before He created the universe, ~ 77

▷▷ to bring all things together under the authority and leadership of Jesus.

▶▶ This plan is being worked out daily

▶▶ And we can rest assured that this plan will be brought to completion, ~ 77

↪↪ because God's plans cannot be thwarted ~ and are always fulfilled. 77 12/13

↪↪ As Isaiah says, ~ "For the Lord of hosts has purposed, ~ and who will annul it? ~ His hand is stretched out, ~ and who will turn it back?"

▶▶ Human history is not random ~ and is being guided to its divinely-appointed end, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ which will culminate in the return of Christ and new heavens and a new earth.

▶▶ And no matter how chaotic and out of control things seem to be, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ no matter how much it appears that evil is winning, ~ the Father's plan will be brought to completion.

↪↪ The day will come when, ~ as Revelation tells us, ~ The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, ~ and he shall reign forever and ever.

JESUS IS VERY ACTIVE ~ IN CREATION, ~ in the lives of his people, ~ and in human history.

### CONCLUSION.

WELL, ~ MUCH TO THINK ABOUT.

▶▶ I encourage everyone to study these things more thoroughly in your personal study time.

▷▷ So you can get an even better grasp on these things.

▶▶ In his first epistle, ~ Peter exhorts believers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, ~ always being prepared to make a defense ~ to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

▶▶ The obvious implication here ~ is that we are to know what we believe.