**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ Over Creation**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 1:15-18**

**Sermon Purpose: To demonstrate the Supreme Sovereignty of Jesus Christ over everything.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 7 reasons why Jesus Christ is pre-eminent over everything.**

**Introduction:** These verses are a poem or possibly a hymn expressing Christ’s supremacy as Creator and Redeemer. Paul’s high Christology countered the false teaching that had infiltrated the Colossian church.

**I. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Image of God. V.15a**

**II. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the First Born over creation. V.15b**

**III. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Creator of all things. V.16**

**IV. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Sustainer of all things. V.17**

**V. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Head of the Church. V.18a**

**VI. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Firstborn from the dead. V.18b**

**VII. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Supreme Sovereign of all things. V.18c**

**I. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Image of God. V.15a**

 The word “image” refers to an exact visible representation of something or someone. Thus, Jesus the Son represented the invisible God of the Old Testament.

 **2 Corinthians 4:4** whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

 **Hebrews 1:3** who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

 **John 14:9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say,`Show us the Father '?

 **John 1:18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

 The word (eikon) means the very substance or essential embodiment of something or someone.

 **Hebrews 10:1** For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

 Therefore, Christ’s supremacy is first shown in His relationship with God the Father. Christ is the exact resemblance and representation of God the Father.

**II. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Firstborn over creation. V.15b**

 Jesus also represented sinless humanity. The title firstborn does not mean that Jesus was created (v.16), but indicates His priority of rank as supreme over all the created order.

 **Genesis 1:26-27** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." **27** So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

 1. The phrase “firstborn” implies both Christ’s priority to all creation (in time). He preceded the whole creation.

 **Exodus 13:2-15** "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine." **3** And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place*. No leavened bread shall be eaten. **4** "On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. **5** "And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. **6** "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *there shall be* a feast to the LORD. **7** "Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. **8** "And you shall tell your son in that day, saying,`*This is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' **9** "It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. **10** "You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year. **11** "And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, **12** "that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD'S. **13** "But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. **14** "So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying,`What *is* this?' that you shall say to him,`By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **15** `And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.'

 **Deuteronomy 21:17** "But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife *as* the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his.

 2. His priority of sovereignty over all creation (in rank). He is sovereign over all creation.

 **Psalm 89:27** Also I will make him *My* firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth. **Revelation 1:5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

 The “firstborn” receives worship of all the angels but creatures should not be worshipped.

 **Hebrews 1:6** But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

 **Exodus 20:4-5** "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; **5** you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,

**III. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Creator of all things. V.16**

 Christ has supremacy over creation and all things created because He created it all.

 **John 1:3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

 **Hebrews 1:2** has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

 The Father, then is the ultimate source (efficient cause), and the Son is the mediating cause of all creation.

 These “heaven” and “earth” implies the entire universe, both material and immaterial.

 Paul’s mention of thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities possibly refers to four classes of angelic beings (that possibly oversee human affairs). This may precede the address on false teachings about the worship of angels or saints.

 **Colossians 2:18** Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

 Christ reigns supreme.

 **Ephesians 1:21** far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

 **Ephesians 3:10** to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,

 **Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

 **Philippians 2:9-10** Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

**IV. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Sustainer of all things. V.17**

 All things refers to everything created (this excludes the Trinity). The preposition “before” very likely is a temporal reference to the pre-existence of Christ before His earthly incarnation.

 The phrase by Him are things “held together” or “consists” presents Christ as the one sustaining all creation.

**V. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Head of the Church. V.18a**

 Paul uses the word “head” in both a literal and metaphorical sense.

 **Colossians 2:10** and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

 **Colossians 2:19** and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

 Literally “head” implies authority, rule, and supreme rank.

 Metaphorically, it plays on the picture of Christ’s relationship to the church as head of the body.

 **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. **14** For in fact the body is not one member but many. **15** If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? **16** And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? **17** If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? **18** But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. **19** And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*? **20** But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. **21** And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." **22** No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. **23** And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, **24** but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, **25** that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. **26** And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*. **27** Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

 **Ephesians 1:22-23** And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

 **Ephesians 4:15** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-- Christ—

 **Ephesians 5:23** For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

 This is a reference to the invisible church or universal church into which all true believers are baptized into by the Holy Spirit the moment they are born again.

 **1 Corinthians 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

 1. Began the day of Pentecost

 **Acts 1:5** "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

 **Acts 2:1-2** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

 **Acts 11:15-16** "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. **16** "Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said,`John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

 2. It is the body in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

 **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

 3. They are a whole new creation of God.

 **Ephesians 2:15** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace,

4. The church is a “mystery” communicated by Paul.

 **Ephesians 3:4-5** by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), **5** which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

 **Romans 16:25-26** Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began **26** but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—

 **Colossians 1:26** the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

**VI. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Firstborn from the dead. V.18b**

 First to rise with an immortal body.

 **1 Corinthians 15:20** But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

 **Hebrews 7:16** who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

 **Romans 1:4** *and* declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

 **Ephesians 1:20-21** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, **21** far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

 He is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead. The language to the creation (v.15) identifies the church as part of the new creation that was inaugurated with the resurrection of Christ. His resurrection resulted in the fulfillment of God’s purpose for Christ, to have first priority in everything.

**VII. Christ is pre-eminent because He is the Supreme Sovereign of all things. V.18c**

 Christ is given and to have first place over all creation, and in everything! He is pre-eminent!

 **Ephesians 1:22-23** And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.