

Christmas 2
January 3, 2010
Colossians 1:13-20

There is no way we can comprehend, no way we can logically figure out, no way our reason is able to grasp the tremendous miracle of Christmas. The event of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, gave us our Savior from sin and death.

These verses focus on that miracle. While we cannot possibly comprehend it, we can believe what the Word of God tells us about who Jesus is. We can rejoice in the miracle. We can praise the God who did it. The most important thing is that we realize He did it for us!

God in the Flesh Worked Our Redemption

The Father both rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

By rights, you and I belong to the dominion of darkness. There wasn't anything good in us. Sin is in us; Adam's rebellion; Adam's choosing satan and his lies; Adam's thinking evil of God; Adam's attempt to be god himself – That's what is in us to begin with. And it shows. Even as believers, with a new nature that does love God and trust in Him, our old, original self still prevents us from keeping our life focused on our good God. We focus on ourselves. We focus on things. We define happiness with what we have or want. We plan and decide things often without a thought about God, what He wants for us, or whether it is God-pleasing.

Because of our evil, darkness has a perfect right to claim us as its own. So darkness exerted its authority over us. It's the authority of darkness over us that the Father rescued us from. God did this. He then transferred us into His Son's kingdom. Jesus, His Son, is the One the Father loves! He loves us in connection with His Son. In Jesus nothing can separate us from God's love.

And His Son is how the Father prepared us for this wonderful transfer. His Son redeemed us. In His Son we have redemption. We are in His Son by faith in His Son. Faith is created in us by God through the forgiveness, the pardon of all sin. The offer of forgiveness of all sin is what awakens faith Jesus.

Do we appreciate the magnificence of our Savior? Probably not. Let these words help us properly appreciate Him. He is magnificent! He is the image, the visible likeness of the invisible God. Christmas made this possible. God the Son brought being human into Himself. He is firstborn over all of creation. Twice in these verses this word 'firstborn' is used for God's beloved Son. He is called the firstborn over all creation. He is called the firstborn out of the dead. The second expression lets us know firstborn has nothing to do in, this case with Jesus being Mary's first born, though of course He was. Here it means that Jesus is one-of-a-kind, that there is no one and nothing else like Him. He is

first. He is superior. He has a relationship with God the Father that no one else has. All the other children of God are so only because of their connection with, their unity with The Son, by faith in Him.

Firstborn over creation is a good translation because St. Paul explains the term this way “because by His beloved Son all things were created.” Everything was created by the Son. No Son, no creation. The same is true, of course, of the Father and the Holy Spirit because God is the Creator. God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When Paul says “all things were created by Jesus” he means “all things.” It includes all things in the heavens (literally), the whole universe and all things on Earth, all visible things and all invisible things, whether they are invisible to us because they are spiritual or because they are too small for us to see. We can't even see them, but Jesus made them, along with the Father and the Spirit. Jesus made all the thrones, lordship and rulers and beginnings and authorities. We don't even know exactly what all those things mean, but the Son made them all. Yes, He made all beginning. “In the beginning God created ...” There also is the Son.

And it was all made for Him and to Him. Everything started by the Son and all of it reaches its point and conclusion and purpose in Him. He's at the beginning of it and at its end.

And between its creation and conclusion these words say the Son also holds it all together. He keeps it all going. Everything endures because of Jesus, in connection with Jesus.

And lest anything here be twisted, like Jehovah's Witness do who say Jesus was the first created thing and then all other created things were made by and through Him, Paul adds, “He is before all things.” He is not one of those things, the first thing after the first beginning. He is. God says, “I Am the I Am.” So, God is. The Son is. The Son is before everything, including time!

Jesus is the Head of the body called the Church. The Church is God's people. Jesus is the Head of God's people. Do you actually think anybody other than God can be the Head of God's people? Let all the churches on Earth remember this. Jesus, God the Son, is the Head of the Church.

Jesus is the firstborn from (out of) the dead. The dead doesn't here mean deadness but dead people. It is plural. This is exactly why God the Son added being a human male to Himself. It was so that He could serve us human beings in His living and in His dying. He lived for us. He died for us. He rose from the dead for us. Jesus is one of a kind in His resurrection. He, and only He, raised Himself from the dead. He, and only He, has so risen bodily to an eternal, glorified bodily life. He is the first such resurrection. He Himself will raise all of the Church, His people, to glorified, eternal bodily life.

Yes, God was pleased to have all of His fullness live in Jesus bodily, visibly.

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And this is the One through whom God reconciled to Himself all things. Sin wrecked the relationship. Christ Jesus restored the relationship between God and what He created. God, through Jesus, made peace with us lost sinners. He made peace through Jesus' blood on the cross, through Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus' death made the life of God the Son the payment for redeeming us from death to life, from sin to forgiveness, from guilt to innocent, from condemnation to justification, from hell to heaven!

Jesus is God and He redeemed us. Because of Jesus, the Father has rescued us from darkness and its hold on us and transferred us in the kingdom of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the inheritance of the light. The miracle of Jesus' birth set all of this in motion. Amen.