

COLOSSIANS 1:15-23: Paul's Defence of Jesus

Why is it so important to have a strong 'DOCTRINE OF CHRIST?'

1. We need to know WHO Jesus IS & WHAT He DID.
2. There are challenges to the deity of Christ in all the world's MAIN RELIGIONS & in the numerous SUPPOSEDLY Christian sects.
→ *What 5 things would you tell a non-believer about Jesus?*
→ *Why is it so important to defend his deity and lordship?*

THE DEMONIC AGENDA IN PLAY

- * The assault on ABSOLUTE TRUTH.
- * Entitlement to INDIVIDUALISM.
- * Leading to the cult of TOLERANCE.

All because the Enemy is desperate to DISCREDIT Jesus.

- *How have those three philosophies worked to discredit Jesus & His claims? What other factors has the Enemy used to further his agenda?*
→ *What key building blocks does the Enemy need to knock down if he wants to discredit Jesus?*

WHAT DO OTHER FAITHS SAY ABOUT JESUS?

ISLAM: A revered PROPHET, but NOT God.

HINDUISM & BUDDHISM: A HOLY man & a wise TEACHER.

JUDAISM: An extremist FALSE MESSIAH or good but martyred Jewish RABBI.

- *How would you approach a conversation about Jesus with members of these four world religions?*

WHAT DO THE TWO MAIN QUASI-CHRISTIAN CULTS SAY ABOUT JESUS?

MORMONS: Opening claims sound very much like TRADITIONAL, ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN BELIEF, but dig a little deeper and considerable DIFFERENCES soon appear.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: Jesus is NOT God, but a LESSER & SEPARATE spirit being, who never THOUGHT OF HIMSELF as God, nor EQUAL to God.

- *Have you ever had a conversation with a Mormon or JW? How did it go? What else do you know / recall about what they teach about Jesus? If they were to knock on your door, what would you say?*

WHAT DOES PAUL SAY ABOUT JESUS in Colossians 1?

1. IMAGE of the invisible God (v15)
 - * Christ PERFECTLY REFLECTS God.

2. FIRSTBORN over all creation (v15)
 - * Signifies the EXALTED STATUS of the Son of God.
 3. The CREATOR (v16) ... John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:2-3
 - * Paul SETTLES ALL DOUBT by describing Jesus as CREATOR of ALL THINGS.
 4. PRE-EMINENT (v17)
 - * ABOVE all, AHEAD of all, was BEFORE all.
 - * Christ is SUPREME, SUPERIOR, SURPASSING & SOVEREIGN.
 - * The Message: Jesus must be FIRST in EVERYTHING.
 5. The HEAD of the body (v18)
 - * Head means SOURCE & ORIGIN, as well as LEADER & RULER.
 6. The BEGINNING (v18) ... John 1:1, Revelation 22:13
 - * It's not just that Christ was IN the beginning or was present AT the beginning. He IS the beginning.
 7. FIRSTBORN from among the dead (v18) ... Revelation 1:5, Romans 8:29
 8. The FULLNESS of God (v19) ... Colossians 2:9
 - * Pleroma = The TOTAL SUM of all the divine POWERS & ATTRIBUTES.
 - * There is NOTHING LACKING or DEFICIENT or INFERIOR in the person of Jesus Christ.
- *Which of these jump out at you? Any fresh reminders of the sufficiency & supremacy & of Jesus in there?*
→ *Why were these important attributes for Paul to highlight to his first century audience? Where did his points challenge / contradict i) What the Jews believed, and ii) What the Gnostics taught?*
→ *Is Jesus really at the head of your life / church life / family life / business life? Any areas need re-examining or re-consecrating?*

RECONCILED (v20-22)

- * Alienated = ESTRANGED, ENEMIES, HOSTILE.
 - * Reconcile = Bringing two ESTRANGED parties TOGETHER, taking them from HOSTILITY to FRIENDSHIP.
 - * N.B. God did the reconciling THROUGH CHRIST ... means we take no credit.
- *Why was important for Jesus to inform the Gnostic teachers / influences that it was Jesus Himself who did the reconciling?*
→ *What does it mean to be reconciled to God? Why do you need to be?*
→ *What does it mean to be a minister of reconciliation? How should that responsibility affect the way you treat other people?*