

## THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IN CREATION

COLOSSIANS 1:16-17

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**P**lease notice that these two verses of scripture present for us, first, a description of creation; and, second, a declaration of the relationship between Jesus Christ and creation.

Verse 16 speaks of all things. This is a description of creation. The description includes things in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible; thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities. This is creation. This is the universe.

Then, verses 16 and 17 use four expressions that relate Christ to all creation. These four expressions are: “by Him,” “for Him,” “He is before all things,” and “by Him all things hold together.” This is the relationship of Christ to creation.

Let’s first take a few moments to examine the universe as it is described in verse 16. Verse 16 discusses all creation by referring to areas, essential elements, and orders. Notice the areas. The writer of Colossians uses the words “heaven and earth” to describe the two primary locations of all creation. Let’s think about the earth first. The things that naturally come to mind when we think about the earth are the things that are so familiar to us. They include every towering mountain or timid hill, every tree-filled forest or grass-covered plain, every barren desert or fertile jungle, every ocean and lake and pond and stream and creek. Creation includes every clod and cloud, every beast and bird, every rock and crevice, every beach and basin, every cliff and canyon, every fish and flower on this globe.” All this is included in creation.

Then, there are the heavens. The writer of COLOSSIANS looked up at the moon, the sun, the stars, stars that are 10,000 times as big as the earth and spread out over fantastic distances across space. All that which is beyond the earth is what we naturally think of when we are talking about the heavens.

But, it is almost certain that when the writer wrote about the heavens, his thoughts took him beyond the material bodies that are spread across space. The word “heaven” in the Bible most often refers to the throne room of God. So the heaven mentioned in our text is in all likelihood a reference not only to the sun, moon and stars, it is also a reference to the heaven that is God’s home.

And then, verse 16 goes on to describe creation according to its essence. It speaks of all that is visible and invisible. The visible part is the part we understand. It is the part that we can see with our own eyes: people and plants and places and products and planets, all the sky and sea and soil of the physical world.

But, the writer also refers to the invisible things. Some Bible teachers think this is a reference to the things beyond the range of human eyesight because they are either too small or too large. I am talking about the molecules and atoms that make up matter, particles so small that they are one million times smaller than the breadth of a human hair; yet, in a single glass of water there are trillions of these particles moving constantly in violent motion. I am also talking about the myriad of stars and planets and solar systems and galaxies that lie beyond the few thousand stars we can number by ordinary sight. Perhaps this is what our text means by things invisible.

However, there are also Bible teachers who disagree with this viewpoint. They believe that the invisible things mentioned in verse 16 refer to angels and spirits and devils, and I tend to agree with them. The Bible teaches that there is a host of spiritual beings, invisible to our eyes, that exists around us and in heaven. Many people these days consider themselves too sophisticated or too educated to believe in such things, and they mock those who do. Certainly there is no way to scientifically prove that these things exist. Neither can we use science to disprove their existence. We must rely on Biblical and historical accounts such as the time when soldiers of Syria came up to a place called Dothan to capture the prophet Elisha. The sophisticated would have said that Elisha had no defense, but the prophet prayed that his servant would be able to see the invisible, and his prayer was answered. The servant was able to see the city surrounded with an angelic army with chariots and horses of fire. These, too, are part of creation.

So, we have two words to describe the areas of creation and two words to describe the essential make-up of creation. And then, we have four words to describe the orders that exist in creation. When we read the GENESIS account of creation, we discover

God not only created oceans and mountains and fish and animals and people, He also created order. He created the sun to govern or rule over the day and the moon to govern over the night. And, He created man to rule over birds and sky and animals and all the earth. And even in the heavenly realm, the Bible makes mention of certain angels created to have authority over other angels. Both in the heavenly realm and here upon this earth, there are distinct orders that exist. I know that these orders have been corrupted by sin, but the fact that they exist cannot be denied. A ranking system exists that affects every kind of creature at every strata of existence. These orders are also included in creation.

So, what we have in verse 16 is a very comprehensive description of creation. It includes all areas, everything that is essential, and all orders. Every existing thing is embraced with these words. It is a description of all kinds of things in every existing place.

Now, the thing we must notice is how all this relates to Jesus Christ. In verses 16 and 17, we find four expressions that relate Jesus Christ to the comprehensive description of creation that we just noted. They are: “by Him,” “for Him,” “He is before all things,” and “by Him all things hold together.”

Verse 17 says he is “before all things.” I believe this to be a reference to time. In other words, before anything else was created, He was. Way back, in the eternal ages before time, when nothing but the voice of God speaking to Himself disturbed the silence of nothingness, when all space was one gigantic vacuum unfilled except with the splendor of God’s glory; before a single angel began to sing the praise of the Lord; before one planet or sun began to move across space; before the earth was hung on its orbit; before a single mountain or ocean was even conceived; before there existed a leaf or a snowflake or a dewdrop or a single blade of grass; before there was even one grain of sand or speck of dust or cobweb; before the creation of the first molecule of matter, an atom or even a proton; Jesus Christ already existed, He was. Before any other thing was, Jesus Christ lived in all the completeness which He possesses within Himself. He is before all things.

Our passage also says, “He made all things.” In fact, this is affirmed twice in verse 16. “All things were created by Him.”

Of course, in this day and age, we have to stop and think about the word, “creation.” Some people, in the name of science, treat matter as if it had always existed and assert that the present order of things came into being by accidental, impersonal, mechanical processes. Of course, they have no scientific proof to make such a statement; however, they still make the statement in the name of science.

The Bible does not try to make a statement in the name of science. It just makes the statement, and the statement is, God created the universe. There was a time when there was nothing at all except the triune God. But then, by an act of His power, Deity caused heaven and earth to come into being. Out of nothing, from nothing, where nothing before had been, the Lord caused the universe to begin. He made the visible and invisible worlds. He produced the heavens and the earth. And then, there came that progressive ordering of creation described in GENESIS 1. Our text says, the person of the Godhead who did all this was Christ.

We live in a universe so vast that it staggers our imagination; so intricate it defies description; so varied it cannot be catalogued; so beautiful it takes our breath away; so profound that ages of study have only scratched the surface of knowledge; so delicately balanced that no watchmaker’s art can even come close in comparison; so durable that nothing is ever really completely destroyed; so dependable that we can calculate time by its movements. And, Jesus made this. He planned it, laid it out, caused it to exist, set it all in motion, ordered all the arrangements, and established it all by His power.

Those of you who are students study progress that has taken place in nature, processes that occur in the natural world, laws that govern chemical reactions, biological principles that operate in living plants and animals, astrological calculations that measure the fantastic size of heavenly bodies in their enormously immense orbits. But what many of you will not read in your textbooks is that our Christ made all this. All these things you study are His handiwork. Creation is “by Him.” That is what our text declares.

Verse 17 also says, “by him all things hold together.” I am not a scientist, but I have learned from scientists that this whole universe is made up on the principle of particles of matter moving at violent speeds around a center. That is true of the heavenly bodies that inhabit space. The sun is the center of our solar system, and all our planets, the earth, Mars, Venus and the rest, roar in orbits around the sun, but are controlled by a form of magnetic attraction that, from the sun, hold our planets in proper place. We are told that our whole solar system is moving as a unit in orbit around the center of our galaxy which is a complex of solar systems all held in certain orbits by the magnetic attraction of some huge star or sun.

And, the same magnetic attraction also exists in all matter. Whether you talk about a lump of soil or a piece of skin or a drop of water or a breath of air, all matter is made up of molecules in mixtures. And, molecules are made up of atoms. And, atoms are tiny particles made up of electrons that spin around a center just like our planets whirl around our sun. And, the thing that holds an atom together is that same magnetic force, that same electrical attraction.

So, in fact, all matter is held together by magnetic attraction. The thing that keeps atoms from splitting apart by themselves causing a gigantic explosion that would disintegrate the whole earth is a mysterious power that men call gravity or electric magnetism. The force that holds all the bodies and plants and animals on the earth, the waters in the seas and the air here where we need it, is the same power. The attraction that keeps all the stars and suns of outer space in their perfect orbits so that they don't crack and smash in wild, unguided, trackless wanderings is this strange power. And, science is limited in its ability to tell us what this force really is or where it comes from.

But, the Bible tells us. It comes from Jesus Christ. COLOSSIANS 1:17 says He holds all things together. The force is His word. HEBREWS 1:3 says that He holds all things together by the word of His power. Just one slight variation of the force that binds together the atoms that make up all matter, and all things would explode and disintegrate. This is the principle involved in the production of atom and hydrogen bombs, breaking up atoms by tampering with the force that binds them together. The existence of all things then is totally dependent upon the magnetic force I have been describing. And, that force is the word of Jesus Christ who says, "let it be so," and by His voice all things are held together. Our text says all things are held together by Jesus.

And, our text says one final thing. It says all creation was made for Him. If a man builds a house, it is built for the purposes he has designed for it. He may have purposed to live in it himself. He may have determined to build it as a wedding present for his son. He may intend to rent the place and make from it a profit. But, it is built for the ends for which the owner has designed it.

Likewise, the universe and all its inhabitants were not created by accident without reason, but by Christ for Himself and for His own divine purpose. And, the Bible tells us that the material world was placed here to be an instrument through which Christ could glorify the Father. All living things were produced to participate in the worship of the Almighty God.

I know the emphasis of the text is not on what Jesus intends to do with the universe He created. The emphasis is simply on the fact that it was created for Him. It was made for Him. But, the logical conclusion is that nothing exists for the purpose of doing what it pleases. All have been created to serve His ends and designs which are to glorify God. The constellations in the sky are made for His use. All of nature's resources are for His intentions. Creation is for Christ.

And so, we bring our meditation concerning the relationship between Christ and creation to a close. Again, that relationship is summed up by the following phrases: "He is before all," "He made all," "He holds all together," and "all was made for Him."

And now, we must ask the question, "So what?" Some of you will not have to think too long how to answer that question. You have thought this through before and you are ready to answer. Or, perhaps you have not thought it through before, but the Holy Spirit is making the answer clear to you at this very moment. You are saying within your heart, "Since He is before all things and all things were made and held together by Him and are for Him, then, as a part of His creation, I must give Him all my obedience and love.

Oh, that everyone we see could give such an answer! But, when I look at people around me, I see the average person has no serious thoughts for Jesus. He gets up, breathes the air around him, eats, walks on solid ground to work or school or play, he makes money and expresses opinions and has fun and goes his own way. And, he couldn't care less about Jesus. He may say that Jesus was a good man who lived long ago and started some religion and had some nice things to say. But, our average person these days wants to live his life as he pleases. He needs no Christ. He can't be bothered about church. He will do what he feels is right. He can leave Jesus alone.

But, the truth is Jesus made that person, his life, and everything he touches, feels or sees. The air he breathes, the food he eats, the sun he enjoys, the ground upon which he stands are the gifts to that man of a Creator. And, Jesus personally sustains that life. By His active care that person's body functions, and his frame holds together and his world continues to exist. And, all this is for a purpose. We are a part of creation designed to bring glory to God. We were made to obey and honor and love and give service to the Lord of heaven and earth.

We cannot go our own way and do as we please and ignore Him. We cannot let the business of life or the busy activities of this Christmas season cause us to forget Him.

Sometimes, when either Janiene or I speak to our children, they do not hear because they are preoccupied. When this happens in our home, you will often hear us say, "Listen, your father is speaking to you," or "Listen, don't you know your mother is saying something to you?" Just the fact that we are parents is reason enough for our kids to listen. Our children owe us their love and attention and care.

But, every creature owes to Christ obedience and appreciation and cooperation. It is a sin to neglect Him. He is the creator of the universe who deserves to be treated as God and King.

What is our attitude toward Jesus? Let's answer this question in light of the revelation of our text. This universe in which we live, this universe that we use and are a part of, is a creation over which Jesus Christ is Lord. Let's not deny His Lordship by doing our own thing. Let us submit to His authority.