

# WHO IS CHRIST?

## Colossians 1:20

Colossians 1:15-20 lists seven characteristics of Christ:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. The visible image of the invisible God                             | <u>1:15</u> |
| 2. Existed before God made anything                                   | <u>1:15</u> |
| 3. He is the one through whom God created everything                  | <u>1:16</u> |
| 4. He is the head of the body, the church                             | <u>1:18</u> |
| 5. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead                 | <u>1:18</u> |
| 6. All God's fullness lives in him                                    | <u>1:19</u> |
| 7. Through Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things | <u>1:20</u> |

Because of who Christ is:

- we ought to worship him with praise and thanks
- we ought to learn about him for he is God
- we ought to obey him for he is the ultimate authority
- we ought to love him for what he has done for us

# THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

## Colossians 1:15

Paul answered the various tenets of the Colossian heresy that threatened the church. This heresy was a “mixed bag,” containing elements from several different heresies, some of which contradicted each other (as the chart shows).

| The Heresy   | Reference   | Paul’s Answer   |
|--|---|---|
| Spirit is good; matter is evil.  | <a href="#">1:15-20</a>                             | God created heaven and earth for his glory.   |
| One must follow ceremonies, rituals, and restrictions in order to be saved or perfected.                     | <a href="#">2:11, 16-23</a> ; <a href="#">3:11</a>  | These were only shadows that ended when Christ came. He is all you need to be saved.  |
| One must deny the body and live in strict asceticism.  | <a href="#">2:20-23</a>                             | Asceticism is no help in conquering evil thoughts and desires; instead, it leads to pride.  |
| Angels must be worshiped.  | <a href="#">2:18</a>                                | Angels are not to be worshiped; Christ alone is worthy of worship.  |
| Christ could not be both human and divine.   | <a href="#">1:15-20</a> ; <a href="#">2:2-3</a>     | Christ is God in the flesh; he is the eternal one, head of the body, first in everything, supreme.  |
| One must obtain “secret knowledge” in order to be saved or perfected—and this was not available to everyone. | <a href="#">2:2, 18</a>                             | God’s secret is Christ, and he has been revealed to all.  |
| One must adhere to human wisdom, tradition, and philosophies.  | <a href="#">2:4, 8-10</a> ; <a href="#">3:15-17</a> | By themselves, these can be misleading and shallow because they have human origin; instead, we should remember what Christ taught and follow his words as our ultimate authority. |
| It is even better to combine aspects of several religions.   | <a href="#">2:10</a>                                | You have everything when you have Christ; he is all-sufficient.   |
| There is nothing wrong with immorality.  | <a href="#">3:1-11</a>                              | Get rid of sin and evil because you have been chosen by God to live a new life as a representative of the Lord Jesus.   |

# MEGATHEMES IN COLOSSIANS

| Theme                        | Explanation  | Importance   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Christ Is God                | Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, Lord of all creation, and Lord of the new creation. He is the expressed reflection of the invisible God. He is eternal, preexistent, omnipotent, and equal with the Father. He is supreme and complete.    | Because Christ is supreme, our life must be Christ-centered. To recognize him as God means to regard our relationship with him as most vital and to make his interests our top priority.   |
| Christ Is Head of the Church | Because Christ is God, he is the head of the church, his true believers. Christ is the founder, the leader, and the highest authority on earth. He requires first place in all our thoughts and activities.                                  | To acknowledge Christ as our head, we must welcome his leadership in all we do or think. No person, group, or church can regard any loyalty as more critical than that of loyalty to Christ.   |
| Union with Christ            | Because our sin has been forgiven and we have been reconciled to God, we have a union with Christ that can never be broken. In our faith connection with him, we identify with his death, burial, and resurrection.                          | We should live in constant contact and communication with God. When we do, we all will be unified with Christ and with one another.  |
| Man-Made Religion            | False teachers were promoting a heresy that stressed self-made rules (legalism). They also sought spiritual growth by discipline of the body (asceticism) and visions (mysticism). This search created pride in their self-centered efforts. | We must not cling to our own ideas and try to blend them into Christianity. Nor should we let our hunger for a more fulfilling Christian experience cause us to trust in a teacher, a group, or a system of thought more than in Christ himself. Christ is our hope and our true source of wisdom. |