

Knowing Christ in Relation to Us and to God

Colossians 1:13-15
Rosanne Griffith

Paul opens his letter to the Colossians with a heartfelt greeting. Next, he prays with thanksgiving for God's work in the lives of these believers. He gives thanks for God's spiritual gifts of faith, love, and hope evident in the saints at Colosse. His prayer continues with supplication for spiritual growth in the Colossians' lives. Spiritual growth abounds when we understand and know God. The very first step to our understanding and knowledge of God is knowing who Jesus is.

Colossians 1:13-18

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the

beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Jesus Christ's Relationship to Us

★ **13** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Verse 13 reveals Jesus as our king. “*For He (God the Father) rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Jesus).*” God rescued us from darkness, that is, evil, ignorance, the sin of this world, and ultimately the torture of hell. Our Lord not only removed us from darkness, He delivered us to Jesus Christ’s kingdom. “*The kingdom of His beloved Son*” is more than just the future earthly millennial kingdom, although this will happen when Jesus returns. Christ’s kingdom for us, as we are now, includes our knowledge of the gospel’s truth and our life in Christ along with an eternal spiritual relationship with God. Jesus Christ is our King, and he has the authority and power to rule over those in His kingdom.

Romans 6:20-23 **20** For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. **21** What benefit did you reap from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. **22** But now having been set free from sin and enslaved to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our Lord took us out of darkness and transferred us to eternal life in Christ's kingdom.

Ephesians 2:1-9 **1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, **2** in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. **3** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 4:17-24 **17** So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; **19** and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. **20** But you did not learn Christ in this way, **21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, **22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be

renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

❖ *How is “the domain of darkness” different from the “kingdom of His beloved Son”?*

Verse 14, “*in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins,*” reveals Jesus Christ as not only our king, but also our redeemer. Redemption means to buy something back. Christ bought us back by shedding His blood on the cross for our sins. Forgiveness and redemption are bound together, without redemption there can be no forgiveness. A penalty must be paid for every sin and the blood of Christ bought us from the bondage of that sin (*Hebrews 7:22*) and gave us the privilege of being a slave for Christ (*Romans 6:18*).

Hebrews 7:22 And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Romans 6:15-18 **15** What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! **16** Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, **18** and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Jesus Christ is our redeemer, without Him there would be no forgiveness.

John 3:16-18 **16** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. **18** He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Romans 3:23-25 **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. **25** God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

Ephesians 1:7-8 **7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace **8** which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight.

❖ *Who is Jesus to you?*

Jesus Christ is our **King**, the authority over us. He is our **Redeemer**, our savior, the One who has paid the price for our sins granting us forgiveness and eternal life with Him.

Jesus Christ's relationship to God

★ 13 ... *His beloved son* ... 15 *He is the image of the invisible God,*

Gaining an understanding of Christ's relationship with God requires another look at verse 13 where Paul writes, "*and transferred us to the kingdom of **His beloved Son**.*" The description of Christ as "***His beloved Son**,*" is a special title unique to Jesus. We need to recognize Jesus in His relationship to God as His beloved Son, His only begotten Son.

John 3:16 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave **His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Matthew 3:17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is **My beloved Son**, in whom I am well-pleased."

The first section of verse 15 describes Christ as, "*the image of the invisible God.*" Let's take a look at what "*image*" means in this verse.

- **Image** (1:15) - This is a deliberate paradox that stretches our minds: Jesus is the visible image of Someone invisible. In Jesus, God provides us with an image – a reflection and revelation – of His true identity. While other symbols in the church show us certain facets of God (like three intertwined circles help us understand the Trinity), only Jesus shows us everything we need to know about God. (*Life Change Series; Colossians and Philemon*)

Jesus Christ is the perfect likeness of God, an exact representation (*Hebrews 1:3*) of the Father (*John 14:8-10*). We can see God the Father when we look at Jesus. He is the visible image of the invisible God.

Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the **exact representation** of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Christ is the radiance of the glory of God, and He is the exact representation of the nature of God. *“Christ is to God as the brightness of the sun is to itself, just as the brightness of the sun cannot be separated from the sun, neither can Christ be separated from His Father. He is the visible expression of the invisible God,”* Dale Whitehead.

John 14:8-10 **8** Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” **9** Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **10** Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

❖ Who is Jesus Christ in relation to God?

Jesus Christ is God the Father’s beloved son, His unique, one-of-a-kind, sinless Son. He is the perfect likeness of God. We can only know God, and have a relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ is our King and Redeemer, who paid the price for our sins with His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus’ resurrection gave us a bridge to God the Father and eternal life in Christ’s kingdom.