d. Principalities—power. The former of these terms means "rules or governments" and the latter "authorities." Further divisions amongst the angelic order of beings.

Note: The amazing statement by Paul concerning all these matters of creation is that in Him all things "consist". The perfect tense of the verb affirms that Christ not only created all listed, but He also maintains it. Things "stand together" continuously by the mighty power of Christ.

Conclusion

The Gnostics did not have the proper view of the Person of Christ. The same error is often located today. Back in the fourth century the Nicene Creed was drawn up to oppose the false views of the Person of our Lord. Bishop Moule many years later wrote that "A Saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther end."

Oh, if you do not know Him personally, bend your will right now and receive Him into your heart personally. He will give you new life abundantly. Amen.

Notes:

"Christ and Creation"
Col. 1:15-17

Introduction

1. This is a touchy subject in some quarters. To us it is a matter of simplicity within the truth of God. What does the Bible teach?

2. The key to all mundane problems is the same as that for eternal truths—what does the Lord say?

3. In this significant passage, the Holy Spirit has provided some marvelous Christological material. It reveals the centrality of our Lord in Creation. This is done by affirming His situation with creation. How is this situation described? Note these statements.

1. His PRIORITY before creation. v. 15.

"Who is the image of the invisible God." Here is a truth which refers to the eternality of Christ. The verb "is" in the original notes what He was before creation and also what He is now in the glorified state. 2 Cor. 4:4 has the same construction. But what is the meaning? It includes the following:

a. Representation. The noun "image" means that Christ is a representation of an archetype. It assumes a prototype. This is not merely, however, a resemblance, but that from which the totality of the features have been drawn. Christ is in all His being the representation of the Father.

b. Derivation. Obliquely, but rightly, the word teaches the thought of the existence of the Father from whence the representation was made.

c. Manifestation. The Lord Jesus is in His being the overt and visible form of the Godhead. He is the engraving of God which can be seen.

d. Expression. In the sense that whatever would be spoken about God in a fashion to be taken in by men, it came in the Person of our Lord. Reminds one of John 1 and Christ as the "Word of God."

Note: The Greek word for "image" is used about 20 times in the N.T. Check out these references for further light: Matt. 22:20; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; Heb. 10:1; Rev. 13:14.

2. His SUPERIORITY over creation. vv. 15, 16.

"The Firstborn of every creature."
Here is a phrase which has caused terrific misgivings concerning the deity of our Lord. Indeed, some groups have utilized it to show that Christ is not indeed true God. In the O.T., the word is used of superiority of position (Ex. 4:22). The case of Isaac and Ishmael is important too (cf. Deut. 21:16, 17 with Gen. 17:15ff) and the word about Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:27-34). The phrase, therefore, has titular significance and in no sense diminuates Christ. Support from the context for this phrase not teaching Christ as a creation is::

a. In Him (as Designer). This is the preposition used for the first "by" in v. 16. In fellowship with the Father, Christ determined the condition of all things and the laws which govern and control them.

b. Through Him (Agent). The second "by" is a prepositional construction denoting the means by which the creation was accomplished. See John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2; 2:10.

c. For Him (Object). In Heb. 2:10 the preposition is different than the one employed here, but

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they vertually mean the same: "for whom are all things." He is the blessed GOAL of all creation! See Rev. 4:11.

d. After Him (Antecedent). He is before everything, hence all creation is after Him. How precious. The "he" is emphatic in the original. Thus the utter folly to claim that Christ is not pre-existent is levelled. The verb "is" also points to His absolute existence as God.

Note: All of these phrases point to the activity of Christ in creation. He was not passive. There could have been no creation outside of Christ. Oh, how the Bible exalts Christ high and above all. Blessed and holy is His Name forever.

3. His AUTHORITY in creation. vv. 16, 17.

"all things were created by Him."
The definite article is used in the original and this means that the several parts do in face form a whole. He created "the all things" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:27, 28). But what are the things which He created? A helpful list is provided in four wonderful pairs of words:-

a. Heaven--earth. This is a general statement. It obviously includes both animate and inanimate creatures for the list following points up some sentient creations.

b. Visible--invisible. From the human point of view, this is the way things are. God sees all things.

c. Thrones--dominions. "Thrones" is a metonymy for the highest angelic beings. The word "dominion" is literally "a lordship" and refers to an angelic being lower in degree than thrones.

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