



Colossians 1 v 15-23

Jesus Christ, supreme and sufficient (able and enough) – Leader's version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

What does the passage say and mean?

90 minutes

Christ is Supreme

1. What is the overall message of this passage?

The supremacy and sufficiency of Christ – Jesus is able, and enough, to save us.

Paul's argument is that because Jesus is supreme Lord, he must be a sufficient Saviour (Lucas 2000, p46).

*2. Read John 12 v 44-45. What does it mean when the Bible says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God?

When we see what Jesus is like, we see what God the Father is like, because Jesus is God. When we see Jesus' compassion, we see the Father's compassion, when we see Jesus' love for the lost and outcast, we see the Father's love for the lost and outcast, etc.

*3. What do you think 'first-born over all creation' means (v15)?

Paul was writing to people in his culture, so we need to work it out from their point of view. The first-born son in 1st century Roman or Jewish culture had rights and privileges, and was always the father's heir. Saying Christ is the first-born over all creation refers to His priority, pre-eminence and sovereignty over creation.

Questions 5-7 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work in pairs.

4. **SDL** Read Colossians 1 v 16. Who created the world?

Jesus.

Now read Genesis 1 v 1. Who created the world?

God.

Both these statements are true. What does this tell you about Jesus?

Jesus is God and He is the creator of everything.

NB Genesis 1 v 2 says the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters – the Trinity was present at creation!

*5. **SDL** Read v16 again. Why was creation created? What do you think about that?

For Jesus! This means that we were created for Jesus.

6. **SDL** What does it mean to say that Jesus has supremacy in everything? (v17)

All things have their function and meaning in Jesus. Jesus sustains (maintains) all things, so all things continue in order, rather than chaos.

It might help to think of specific examples e.g. if the earth shifted off its axis by even a tiny amount, we would all either fry or freeze. The earth is at just the right angle to the sun to give us a climate we can survive in.

*7. How is Jesus described in v18-19 and what do these things mean?

- *The head of the body of Christ, which is the church. Consider what it means to say that Christ is the head of the church (= believers, not an institution or building) – He has authority over the church, has revealed His will for the church in the Scriptures, we should be obedient to Him as individuals and corporately etc.*
- *The beginning and the first-born from the dead. In this context, first-born refers to Jesus being the first person to be resurrected from the dead into new life; He is the beginning of the new creation. (Lazarus and others who were raised from the dead died again). Jesus is the first-born among many – all believers will follow him through death into new eternal life.*
- *He has the supremacy. Jesus is ruler of all. No-one rules over Jesus (although He obeys the Father).*
- *All God's fullness dwells in Jesus – Jesus is fully God and fully man.*

***?**

What difference should it make in our churches when we recognise Jesus as head of the church?

Does your church function in a way that recognises Jesus' authority? Does God's word really have authority in your church?

Christ is Sufficient

8. Read v15-20 again, and circle the words 'all' and 'everything' every time you see them.

'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over **all** creation. For by him **all** things were created v things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all** things were created by him and for him. He is before **all** things, and in him **all** things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the first-born from among the dead, so that in **everything** he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have **all** his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself **all** things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' (NIV 1984)

9. Why do you think Paul keeps using these words?

They highlight that Jesus is Lord and Creator - He is able and He is enough.

10. Read v20. How did Jesus 'make peace through his blood, shed on the cross'?

Jesus paid the price of our sins when He died on the cross, so we can be forgiven when we repent and believe. He has made peace between God and (repentant) people.

Read Colossians 1 v 21-23

*11. Read v21. How does the Bible describe someone who does not trust Jesus Christ? How does our evil behaviour separate us from God?

Alienated from God. Sin separates us from God because God is holy and sin is completely offensive to Him. We're not just in God's bad books; the Bible says we are His enemies.

*12. Verse 21 was hard to hear. What is the good news in v22?

God has reconciled us to Himself (mended the broken relationship) through Jesus' death in our place. (Paul is writing to Christians, so 'us' refers to believers, not to the whole of humanity). As believers, we are without blemish and free from accusation in God's sight, because He sees that Jesus has paid for our sin. (This doesn't mean we are innocent or exempt from the authority of the Criminal Justice System).

*13. What does Paul say we need to do, as Christians, and why? (v23)

Stand firm in our faith, 'not moved from the hope held out in the gospel'. We need to stand firm because the truth of Christ does not change with circumstances so neither should our faith. This doesn't mean we won't struggle sometimes; it means we should trust Jesus on a bad day just as much as we do on a good day, because what we learnt in the light is still true in the dark.

***?**

In what areas of your life do you find it hard to stand firm in your faith? What do you need to put in place to help you?

Consider practical ways prisoners can be supported in their faith – continuing to study the Bible together, praying for strength to stand firm, praying for each other, knowing how to find other Christians when they're struggling etc.

*14. In what ways are we being reminded that Jesus is a sufficient Saviour? (v22)

The verse is a statement that Jesus has reconciled us with God. The job is finished, complete.

***?**

Do you truly know that what Jesus did on the cross is sufficient to save you, if you trust Him? Are you assured (confident) of your salvation and place in heaven?

You can't logically answer yes to one and no to the other. If people are not assured of their salvation, help them to think again about Jesus being sufficient.

15. **SHOUT-OUT** Read v15-23 again, and make lists of what we learn about Jesus being supreme and being sufficient.

Jesus is supreme (above all, and so, able)	Jesus is sufficient (enough)
<i>Image of the invisible God (v15)</i>	<i>God has reconciled all things to Himself through Jesus (v20)</i>
<i>First-born over all creation (v15)</i>	<i>God made peace through Him, through His blood shed on the cross (v20)</i>
<i>All things created by him (v16)</i>	<i>We are reconciled to God through Christ's death (v22)</i>
<i>All things created for him (v16)</i>	<i>In Christ, we are holy, without blemish, free from accusation (v22)</i>
<i>He is before all things (v17)</i>	
<i>In him all things hold together (v17)</i>	
<i>He is the head of the church (v18)</i>	
<i>He is the beginning and the first-born from the dead (v18)</i>	
<i>All God's fullness dwells in him (v19)</i>	

?

Why is it important to understand that Jesus is supreme? (that He is our Lord and King)

If we don't understand or believe that Jesus is supreme, we cannot hold to the statement that Jesus is God. If Jesus is not God, He was a liar and did not have the power save us or give us eternal life etc.

*?

Why is it important to understand that Jesus is sufficient? (that what He has done is enough to save us)

So we know that we don't need to do anything to earn our salvation. It's a free gift, with no work on our part. We just have to accept the gift by faith.

Check out – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



Colossians 1 v 15-23

Jesus Christ, supreme and sufficient

What does the passage say and mean?

Christ is Supreme

1. What is the overall message of this passage?
2. Read John 12 v 44-45. What does it mean when the Bible says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God?
3. What do you think 'first-born over all creation' means (v15)?
4. Read Colossians 1 v 16. Who created the world?

Now read Genesis 1 v 1. Who created the world?

Both these statements are true. What does this tell you about Jesus?

5. Read v16 again. Why was creation created? What do you think about that?
6. What does it mean to say that Jesus has supremacy in everything? (v17)

7. How is Jesus described in v18-19 and what do these things mean?

?

What difference should it make in our churches when we recognise Jesus as head of the church?

Christ is Sufficient

8. Read v15-20 again, and circle the words 'all' and 'everything' every time you see them.

'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation. For by him all things were created v things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the first-born from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' (NIV 1984)

9. Why do you think Paul keeps using these words?

10. Read v20. How did Jesus 'make peace through his blood, shed on the cross'?

Read Colossians 1 v 21-23

11. Read v21. How does the Bible describe someone who does not trust Jesus Christ? How does our evil behaviour separate us from God?

12. Verse 21 was hard to hear. What is the good news in v22?

13. What does Paul say we need to do, as Christians, and why? (v23)

?

In what areas of your life do you find it hard to stand firm in your faith? What do you need to put in place to help you?

14. In what ways are we being reminded that Jesus is a sufficient Saviour? (v22)

?

Do you truly know that what Jesus did on the cross is sufficient to save you? Are you assured (confident) of your salvation and place in heaven?

