

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
February 3, 2013

The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

Read Colossians 1:15-20

Key verse: “All the fullness of God was pleased to live in Him” (Colossians 1:19).

A well-known actress shared how her personal spirituality borrows from a conglomeration of religions: “I consider myself a spiritual person,” she said. “I believe in an idea of God, although it’s my own personal idea. I find most religions interesting, and I’ve been to every kind of denomination: Catholic, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist. I’ve taken bits from everything and customized it.”

The New Testament was written, and Christianity forged, in a culture that advocated the worship of many gods. The Book of Colossians, specifically, was written to combat a counterfeit Christianity that was threatening the Church. This “gnostic” heresy denied the deity of Christ. Colossians 1:15-20 proclaims that Jesus Christ is the supreme, complete, and fully adequate revelation of God....

“The Son is the image of the invisible God” (v. 15a). The word translated “image” here is the Greek word *eikon*. It was used to mean both a portrait of a person’s likeness and a manifestation of something or someone. So, Jesus Christ is, first, the fully accurate revelation of who God is and what God is like. A 7-year-old girl was asked by her Sunday School teacher: “Who is Jesus?” The little girl answered, “That’s easy. Jesus is the best picture of Himself that God ever took.”

So, Jesus Christ is the fully accurate revelation of who God is and what God is like. But Jesus is more than that. As the *eikon* of the invisible God, Jesus is also the manifestation of the invisible God. That is, Jesus is God Himself in human manifestation.

“[The Son is] the one who is first over all creation because all things were created by Him” (vv. 15b-16a). Jesus Christ was not merely a human being. Jesus, the Son, was both un-created and himself the Creator! Here Colossians echoes the affirmation of John’s prologue: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the

beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3).

“All the fullness of God was pleased to live in Him” (v. 19). To the gnostic heresy of the first century and to the do-it-yourself spiritualities of today, orthodox Christianity affirms: In the person of Jesus Christ, *God was incarnated*. God put on flesh and came to live among us.

“He existed before all things, and all things are held together in Him” (v. 17). Pastor and author Tim Keller said that a Sunday School teacher changed his life with a simple illustration. That teacher said, “Let’s assume the distance between the earth and the sun (92 million miles) was reduced to the thickness of this sheet of paper. If that is the case, then the distance between the earth and the nearest star would be a stack of papers 70 feet high. And the diameter of our galaxy would be a stack of papers 310 miles high.”

The teacher continued, “Our galaxy is just a speck of dust in the universe, yet Jesus holds the whole universe together by the word of His power.”

The teacher then asked her students, “Now, is this the kind of person you ask into your life to be your *assistant*?”

(Contact Michael at msigler@fumcfwb.com).