

Colossians 1: 13-23

13-14 First review the preceding prayer and its expected results. Thankfulness - Psalm 50:23 See the light and dark metaphor in Acts 26:18 - Gentiles are now qualified to share in the inheritance - the promises to Abraham. Romans 11:17; Galatians 3:29 What qualifies us? How were we redeemed and forgiven?

15 Gnosticism has a lot in common with New Age. Both think Jesus is not unique, just a higher level than most spirits. Paul declares to see Him is to see God. Jesus said so. (Verse 19; John 14:9) He had a physical body. (Verse 22) Both New Age and Gnostics think attaining a higher state has to do with knowledge that only a few can attain. Paul insists this is for every man.

Image -*eikon* -"representation" but if perfect enough is "a manifestation". In the inter-testamental book of Wisdom 7:26, *eikon* is used of Wisdom. The Jews saw wisdom as ever with God. *Eikon* is used by Philo to refer to Logos. It was the perfect word for both cultures.

Man is the *eikon* of God (Gen 1:26-27) Jesus exemplified what man was meant to be by revealing God. *Eikon* also meant portrait or distinguishing characteristics - all apply!

This has many applications to the manifestations of God in the Old Testament, and explains why no man can see God and yet they see this One who can empty Himself of glory that we may behold Him. (Philippians 2:7)

Firstborn - *prototokos* - positional importance more than time. (Exodus 4:22) See use as a Messianic title in Psalm 89:27.

16 Jesus is the Creator! (1Corinthians 8:6) Gnostics thought an inferior god made the world in an evil state. Paul says the very manifestation of God, Jesus, made all realms. He is the reason for creation!

17 Gravity, the strong and weak atomic forces, ionic force, magnetic force, all are not only scientific law but divine!

18 Consider the implications of Christ as the head of the body, the church. All our direction should come from Him. We need to be fit/healthy, to follow the instructions we receive from Him. Beginning- meaning source. The firstborn from the dead means He is alive forevermore guaranteeing our resurrection. Preeminent - for even death cannot hold Him. Lord of all! Supreme over all things.

19-20 Fullness - *pleroma* - completeness, more than a portrait (*eikon*) nothing is left out! No further revelation is needed. Hebrews 1:3 God reaches out to reconcile us to Him. He never stopped loving. Things *panta* is neuter in Greek. Even the fallen physical universe will be redeemed. Romans 8:23 "all things" – this is the universalists favorite verse... It is difficult to explain, but taken with other Scripture, Paul cannot mean the unrepentant or the devil and his angels.

21-22 "Reconciliation has another kind of obligation, that of standing fast in the faith and never abandoning the hope of the gospel. Reconciliation demands that through sunshine and through shadow we should never lose confidence in the love of God. Out of the wonder of reconciliation are born the strength of unshakable loyalty and the radiance of unconquerable hope." Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)

These verses are the story of every redeemed soul. We were alienated from God. We are now holy, blameless, and above reproach, not because of what we have done, but because of what He did on our behalf. In gratitude we desire to live in a way that is worthy of that love.

23 IF... There are two views on this expression and the church is split on the interpretation. One is that the works prove your faith. In other words if the works don't follow you never really were born again. The other is that you must continue in the faith to be saved. In other words, an individual can walk away from their faith and thereby lose their salvation.

Why are we to give thanks?

What does it mean that Jesus is the image of God and firstborn over creation?

Who is the Creator?

What is behind the natural laws that hold things together?

What are the implications of Jesus being head of the church?

Compare "fullness" and "image".

Discuss Christ's reconciliation of all things.