

Bible Studies for Life for July 12: Exalting the Son

June 29, 2009

The “King of Pop” Michael Jackson died unexpectedly on June 24 at the age of 50. All the major news networks had stories covering the reaction of his fans to his death. Fans placed flowers on his Hollywood star. Tears of sorrow flowed from eyes, and some even dressed up like Jackson wearing his signature sequined glove to pay honor to him. If you watched some of the news coverage, did you draw the conclusion that some people have exalted Jackson to a god-like status in their lives?

There is only one person who deserves complete surrender of our will and life. That person is God’s Son, Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of Colossians, the Apostle Paul explores key insights about Jesus Christ, God’s Son, as eternal Creator, Head of the Church, and Savior and Lord.

Eternal Creator (Colossians 1:15-17)

Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Colosse while imprisoned in Rome. He wanted to combat the false teachings creeping into the church by reminding the Christians they had everything they needed in Jesus Christ.

One of the heresies being taught was that one had to obtain “secret knowledge” in order to be saved or perfected. This “secret knowledge” was not available to everyone. Another false teaching was that one had to combine aspects of several religions in order to get right before God.

False teachers also were declaring that the physical world was evil, and God himself could not have created it. They believed the spirit is good, but all physical is evil. God was only in charge of the spirit world. This was false.

To counter this false teaching, Paul writes about the supremacy of Christ. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” (Colossians 1:15). The word “image” translates to mean that Jesus was not just a replica but he was God himself visible to the world so mankind could have a personal relationship with the Creator.

The phrase “firstborn over all creation” does not mean that Jesus, as some heretical groups claimed, was the first created being. Firstborn is a title of position and power, proclaiming Christ as supremacy over all of creation.

Verse 16 tells us Christ is Lord of all—“For by him all things were created: 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” (Colossians 1:16). Both the spiritual and physical worlds were established by and ruled by Christ himself.

God is not only the Creator but also the one we can rely on to provide all we need. “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17). We must trust God and his son, Jesus Christ, to protect us, care for us and sustain us. Jesus deserves first place in our lives.

Head of the church (Colossians 1:18-20)

The third sermon I ever preached was at my wife’s home church, First Baptist Church of Hallsville. I was nervous because my wife grew up in this church. I did not want to embarrass her as I preached that morning. I developed what I thought was a cute illustration by reminding the listeners that in order to add fractions together there must be a common denominator.

I boldly proclaimed, “In order for the church to succeed, Jesus Christ, the figure head of the church, must be the common denominator in all that we do.” After I spoke, I noticed some laughing coming from the pew where my wife was sitting along with some long time friends who had come to

support me. After the service, my wife explained to me the snicker came because they knew what I said was not what I meant. I had accidentally called Jesus a person who holds a position but has no power.

In my nervousness I had made a mistake. Jesus is not the figurehead but rather the head of the church. The truth is, “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy” (Colossians 1:18).

Jesus Christ does not share power with anyone. His victory over death at the cross proves he reigns over the spiritual and physical world. Only Jesus is the “head” of his “body” the “church.” The church today is the visible body of Christ in the world.

In verse 19, we learn “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.” Christ is fully human and fully divine. Christ’s death on the cross provided a way for all people to know God “by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:20).

In Jesus Christ, God has purposely accomplished his plan of reconciliation to a lost world. Another Savior does not need to come and we do not need another saving event. Jesus did it all and the church must seek and follow his leadership.

Savior and Lord (Colossians 1:21-23)

What happens when a person makes a personal faith decision to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? The person no longer is “alienated from God” because sins have been forgiven. Our situation with God has been changed because he “has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (Colossians 1:22).

The physical body of Jesus had to die. His suffering death as a human

showed sinful man that he died in place of the sinner. Jesus truly removed our sin. By trusting in Jesus, man is allowed to be free from sin. Jesus has made the way for all men to be right with God and empowers the Christian to live the way he desires.

Jesus changes the lives of those who believe in him. A saved person can no longer believe what they want or do what they want. A believer is to remain faithful in their commitment to Christ. Anything leading a believer to shift allegiance from Christ must be resisted. The believer is not to move away "from hope held out in the gospel" (Colossians 1:23).

A committed follower of Christ enjoys a quality of life with purpose that becomes even more glorious when they die and go to heaven. This glory is only secured through belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior.