

The Master's Instructions about Himself

God the Son (Colossians 1:9-2:10)

Paul wrote about Jesus Christ as if he had known him for years on this earth. In fact he had only briefly met the risen Lord while on a journey to Damascus. When he asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' he was told, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting' (Acts 9:5). That was his first encounter with Jesus, but not his last. The rest of his life was spent in praising God for his knowledge of Christ, and pursuing God for a greater knowledge of him. He was very concerned that the people he led to faith in Jesus Christ should also grow in their knowledge of God. In beginning his letter to the Colossians, Paul links God the Father and God the Son. He says that God is 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1:3), God is the founder of 'the kingdom of the Son he loves' (1:13), and that 'God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus Christ]' (1:19). A true Christian knows Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son.

Jesus Christ is God's Son (1:3, 13)

The Father's voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son,' immediately after Jesus was baptized (Matthew 3:17). Peter spoke up that he believed Jesus to be 'the Christ, the Son of the living God', after the Father revealed the truth to him (Matthew 16:16). He had lived with Jesus - watching him and listening to him, wondering about him and learning from him. A Roman centurion who watched Jesus die on Calvary's cross exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God' (Matthew 27:54). From before the creation of the world, through the time he was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit; through his crucifixion to his crown in glory now, Jesus Christ is God's Son.

Jesus Christ is the image of God (1:15)

God expressed himself to the human race in a form that we could understand. Jesus Christ as a man is God's *expression* of himself to us. We receive an unmistakable *impression* of what God is like, what he does, what he wants, who he is and how he acts, when we look at Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son who shows his Father's characteristics because the fullness of God lives in him. We cannot see him as Peter did, nor as the centurion did, nor probably as Paul did, but Jesus did promise that the one who believes will be blessed (John 20:29).

Jesus Christ is the Creator of the world (1:16-17)

What is true of everything else in the world around us is not true of Jesus Christ. He is not a creation of God. He is God the Creator. He was *before* all things and he is the *beginning* of all things. He was present at creation. Genesis 1:26 records God saying, 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness' (italics mine). John said that nothing that has been made has been made without him.

Jesus Christ is also the *power* of creation. His word once created something out of nothing and his will now keeps all things from becoming nothing again. What a comforting thought, to think that he who made all things now promises to make all things new in the life of any believer.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (1:18-21)

His resurrection leads to our regeneration. Although we were in a state of alienation from God, because of our sin, we can now live in reconciliation with him because of our Saviour. Christ took our sin onto his body and saved us with his blood. His propitiation made peace with God for us.

All men and women who are born again belong to his church. He is our Head and we make up his body. He expresses himself through our hands and our hearts. We express ourselves to him by our worship and witness.

If I am born of God, then Jesus Christ, God's Son, is my Saviour. I must learn to receive Christ Jesus as Lord and be rooted and built up in him. It is not sufficient to become a Christian. I must also *be* a Christian. The resources I need are all in Christ and Christ now lives in me.