

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: COLOSSIANS 1:15-23



Christ is supreme over all.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Christ is head over creation. After Paul's opening remarks to the Colossians, he exalts Christ. First, Paul exalts Christ as the image of the invisible God. This is similar to what John tells us in his Gospel: "No man has ever seen God, but God the One and only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18). Paul then opens our eyes to the work of Christ in creating the world. Not only did the Son create the world, but He also sustains it and holds it together. When Jesus wanted to feed the multitude, he multiplied the bread and fish. When Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, they listened. And when Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth, he came forth.

Christ is head over re-creation. Christ is not only head over the original creation but also the new creation that comes to men via the Holy Spirit. Christ is the head of the church so that He has supremacy over all things. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross restored peace between God and man. Jesus did this by taking the punishment we deserved.

All things will be reconciled by the blood of the cross. The entire creation was affected by the fall, which came when Adam sinned. Romans 8:20-22 tells us that all of creation was frustrated and affected by the fall. Paul goes on in that passage to tell us that one day the creation will be liberated from this curse of sin and destruction and that the creation "groans" for this to happen. This does not mean the creation is actually making noise but that it needs to be fixed. Just like a crooked picture on the wall seems to say, "Straighten me up," so the creation is in need of restoration. Here in Colossians 1:20 we see just how this "fix" will come. Not only does Christ's sacrifice reverse the curse of sin in the lives of those who believe, but it also reverses the curse that the sin of Adam brought upon the world. This will happen at the end of the age, when Jesus returns.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

After introducing the peace that resulted from Christ's sacrifice on the cross in verse 20, Paul goes on to more fully describe this wonderful miracle. We were separated - alienated - from God as His enemies. Right from the very beginning with Adam and Eve, sin separated people from God. After sinning, Adam and Eve were afraid of God. Now, through the sacrifice of Jesus, people can be reconciled to God. Not only that, but also our sins can be taken away so that we are presented without blemish (that is, without sin). We who have been saved are then called to continue in faith and hope in the promise of the gospel.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

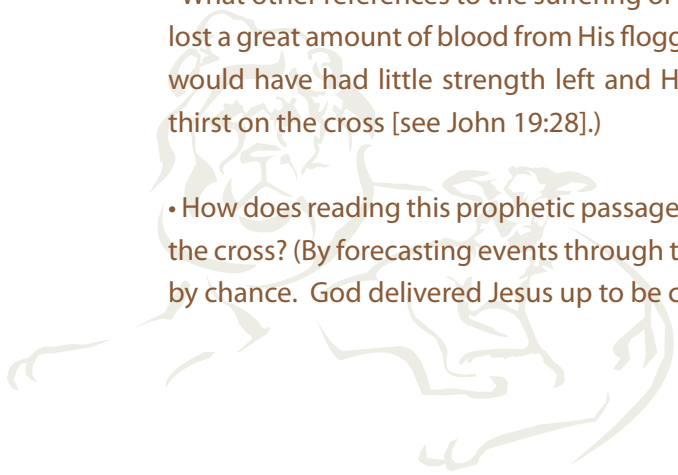
Bible Passage: Psalm 22:14-16

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus' hands and feet were pierced when He was nailed to the cross. When Thomas doubted, he insisted on seeing and touching the nail marks in Jesus; feet and hands (see John 20:25). These verses in Psalm 22 are a picture of the crucifixion of our Lord.

Questions for reflection:

- What other references to the suffering of Christ do you see in this passage? (Jesus sweated terribly and lost a great amount of blood from His flogging. In that way He was poured out like water. Jesus certainly would have had little strength left and He would have been badly dehydrated. Jesus expressed His thirst on the cross [see John 19:28].)
- How does reading this prophetic passage point to God's sovereign control over the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross? (By forecasting events through the prophets, we see God is really in control. Nothing happens by chance. God delivered Jesus up to be crucified according to His predetermined plan.)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

WHO CREATED WHAT?

Supplies:

- wooden spoon
- penny
- wool socks
- nail

This exercise is designed to help us appreciate Christ's supremacy in creation.

Hold up one of the items and ask the class if anyone can name the item and tell you how it was created. They will likely only share the manufacture of the item and call it by its manufactured name. When you have gone through all four items point out that none of the children spoke of God's role in the creation of the items.

For instance, the wooden spoon was formed by man out of a tree which was created by God. The penny was formed of copper and zinc that God created when He formed the earth. The wool came from a sheep that was created by God. The nail was formed from iron ore mined out of the earth which God created.

Talk to the class about our tendency to forget God and exalt man. Tell them that Paul in the first chapter of Colossians wanted to do just the opposite. Paul wanted to exalt Christ.



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WE ARE WEAK BUT HE IS STRONG

Supplies:

Two identical balloons filled to the same size with identical ribbons. Have one balloon filled with helium and one filled with air.

The object of this exercise is to show just how much we lack power.

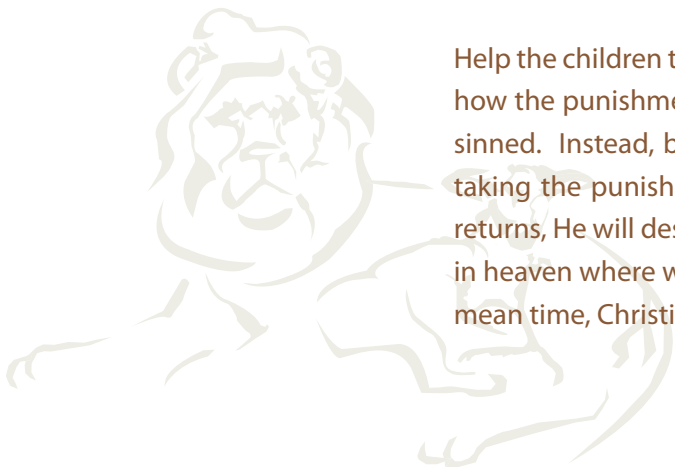
Ask for a volunteer to come forward. Show them the balloon filled with air. Drop the balloon and allow it to fall to the ground. Have the volunteer pick up the balloon and hold it. Ask them to give you the balloon. Then explain to them that you are going to drop the balloon again and you want them to command the balloon to stop and then command it to rise. (They may look at you like you are crazy but have them do it anyway.)

Of course they will not be able to control the balloon. Repeat the exercise with the helium balloon and another volunteer only this time they should command the balloon to fall. Again, they will be powerless to order the balloon.

Draw out the class with the following questions:

- Why couldn't the students command the balloons? (They have no power over the balloons.)
- Who has power over these balloons to command them? (Jesus has authority over all creation and could command the balloons.)
- How would you compare man with Christ when it comes to power? (Christ has all power and authority over man and man has no power or authority over Christ.)
- Does that mean men should obey Christ? (Yes, we should obey Christ.)
- Why don't we obey Christ? (We don't obey because sin has touched every part of us and the desire to sin remains in us, even after we believe. Sin is rebellion against God, so we don't always do what we are told; we do what we want instead.)
- Why is doing what we want such a crime against God? (God, who is the creator of all, created us to obey and follow him, but we do not. We fight God's plan by sinning.)

Help the children to see how proud it is to sin against God. Then talk to them about how the punishment for sin is death. God did not destroy man instantly when he sinned. Instead, because of His mercy He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross, taking the punishment for our rebellion. On the Day of Judgment, when Christ returns, He will destroy sin and death. All those who believe will go to be with Him in heaven where will be no more sin. Then we will fully obey His command. In the mean time, Christians desire to show their love for Christ by obeying Him.



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CHRIST, THE IMAGE OF GOD

Supplies:

Polaroid camera with instant film or a digital camera and mini printer. (If you do not have access to either of the two, take pictures of the children a week or so ahead and simply bring the photos with you.)

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate how a picture is an image of a person. Then you can talk about how Christ is the image of God who is otherwise invisible to us.

Take a photo and show it to the class. Ask them whose image it is. Do this again and again, until they understand that an image is a representation of the original.

Finally ask them who is Christ an image of? The answer of course is the invisible God. See Colossians 1:15.

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

Have the children draw a picture of some aspect of creation. Have each child draw something a bit different. One may choose to draw a picture of a mountain, another picture of their family. Have all the children write "In Him all things hold together" at the top of their paper. Make a large mural on the wall with all the papers and then talk to the children about how your class' mural is a good illustration of Colossians 1:15-17.



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FOR THE OLDER GRADES

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT JESUS?

Supplies

Paper and pencil

Have the children read through the first chapter of Colossians and make a list of everything we learn about Christ from this passage. Then discuss their findings as a class.

Ask them these follow up questions: If all we had was the first chapter of Colossians, would a person be able to learn the gospel? (Yes, the gospel message is contained in this chapter. Take time for the children to point out the gospel.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Colossians – The church in Colosse was not directly planted by Paul. In fact, it is likely that Paul never visited Colosse (see Colossians 2:1). The church there was started by Epaphras who Paul calls a faithful minister of Christ (see Colossians 1:7). In Acts 19:10 we are told Paul's ministry in Ephesus resulted in all of Asia hearing the gospel. It is likely that the Epaphras learned of the gospel as it spread from the people in Ephesus. Epaphras was eventually held with Paul as a prisoner (see Philemon 1:23). In fact, Epaphras seems to be with Paul when he wrote this letter (see Colossians 4:12-13).

