

Readings:

Colossians 1:18
3 John 1:9

Introduction

1. When the Holy Spirit caused Paul to write, “That in all things He might have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1:18), he penned a statement which is impossible for our comprehensions to grasp the stupendousness of. This and the following Sermon Outlines will be expanded on some of the ways the Lord is preeminent.
2. What does it mean to be preeminent? Preeminence does not mean joint ownership. In this context it means the acknowledging of the place God has given to Christ by being subject to Him one hundred percent. The problem in the New Testament churches is they had an imagined joint ownership between them and the Lord, viewing themselves as equals in administration as the Lord. Do we have similar problems today as there were in Corinth?
 - a) Divisions (1 Cor. 1:10-12); disgraceful behavior (1 Cor. 11:20-22); doctrinal error (1 Cor. 15:12, 35). Where was the preeminence of the Lord at Corinth?
 - b) False gospel being preached in Galatia (Gal. 1:6-9); unsettling the saints (Gal. 1:6). Where was the preeminence of the Lord at Galatia?
 - c) They were adding works to salvation in Colossae (Col. 2:8) and belittling Christ’s deity (Col. 1:19; 2:9). Where was the preeminence of the Lord at Colossae?
 - d) There was Diotrephes who loveth to have the preeminence and in so doing dethroned the Lord (3 Jn. v. 9). Where was the preeminence of the Lord in that man’s heart or in the assembly?

The Preeminence of The Lord

The truth of Preeminence is used several times regarding the Lord in the New Testament.

- a) “That in all things He might have the preeminence.” (Col. 1:18)
- b) “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” (1 Pet. 3:22)
- c) “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.” (Eph. 1:22)
- d) It is manifested in some of His titles, such as:
 - i) The only Forerunner (Heb. 6:20)
 - ii) The Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:23)
 - iii) The Firstborn (Rom. 8:29)

It will be recognized that these notes are little more than a “springboard” for to lead to further expansion and meditations. Some of the musings could be divided into several messages.

- a) In our meditations we shall observe that God has declared the Lord’s preeminence, recognized it, or will manifest it. His preeminence is the theme for a number of papers.

Aspects Of The Preeminence Of The Lord

Attraction

In the Song of Solomon (ch. 5:9-16) there are multiple beauties described, but for this paper two of them will be considered:

- a) The answer of the young lady to the question, “What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?”
- b) “He is altogether lovely.”

The young lady is asked the question, “What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?”

- a) In her answer she does that which we often do, use bodily parts to describe features or emotions. In her review of his body she mentions gold three times and associates them with bodily parts. Understanding that gold indicates glory therefore:
 - i) When speaking of his head which is as the most fine gold, there is the indication of the glory of His headship.
 - ii) When mentioning His hands, there is the indication of glory of His:
 - 1. Handiwork in creation
 - 2. Hands in compassion and healing
 - iii) When mentioning His feet there is the indication of the glory of His pathway.

What is meant when we speak of the loveliness of the Lord? It is more than the loveliness of physical external features, more than the loveliness of inward character of kindness, patience, and compassion. The loveliness of Christ is the beauty of His human spirit as it displayed the beauty of God, of holiness through the perfection of motives, thoughts, decisions, workmanship, speech, and goals etc.

What is meant when she summarizes all her glowing response by the words, “He is altogether lovely”? The loveliness of the Lord is the beauty of His holiness, for holiness is the balancer of every other attribute. Without holiness grace becomes distorted and gives way to license, Biblical adherence becomes distorted and gives way to legalism. She does not say, “He is lovely” but “He is altogether lovely” that is, He is lovely, desirable, appealing in every way and characteristic. Some of the ways in which we also say “He is altogether lovely” is when we consider how He was:

- a) Lovely in His reverence when praying.
 - i) I have no doubt that speaking to His God and Father was never a chore or interruption in His life. Neither was it just a thing to be done. Getting away from the corruption of the world into the celestial air of Heaven (so to speak) and speaking to and listening to the voice of God was no doubt a delight. When He prayed He was able to say, “Father” and knew the holy privilege that was. He will say, “Father, I thank Thee that thou hast heard me . . . always” (Jn. 11:41-42). Never did He shrink from fellowshiping with God, never did He have a nagging remembrance of a sin, never had He a confession to make.
 - ii) The real loveliness was seen in the reverence with which He spoke to God the Father. Even though He was in perfect equality and eternally with God, such was the totality of His humanity in its acknowledging of God’s rightful place that He only could honestly and fully say, “Thou art my God” (Psa. 22:10). He called God “Abba” (Mk. 14:36) (*which does not mean daddy*) Father (Matt. 11:26); My Father (Jn. 18:11); Holy Father (Jn. 17:11); and righteous Father (Jn. 17:25).
- b) Lovely in the burden of His prayers.
 - i) Knowing that which lay ahead of Simon Peter, the Lord said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Lk. 22:31-32). He did not pray that Peter would not fail like all of us, Peter had a considerable amount of pride and needed to learn some humility. He needed the fall. That which the Lord prayed was for Peter’s faith not to fail. When all that motley throng came to the garden Peter also ran for his life, and his faith in Christ as the Messiah would be badly shaken when He saw the Lord crucified, and knew He had been buried. Was this the end of everything? Perhaps it was all just a wonderful dream and now time to get back to work as a fisherman. Would his faith stand the pressure by which, despite everything, he would still fully believe that Jesus was the Christ? He would, for the burden of the Lord’s prayer was that his faith would not fail.
- c) Lovely in His silence and speech.
 - i) As the false accusers and Herod’s men set Him at nought mocking and deriding Him, He stood silent never saying a word of rebuke or retaliation. Herod wanted to see something done by the Lord but the Lord did no mighty work for Herod’s curiosity. The reason in part is because when

Herod killed John, he silenced the voice of God and the Lord had nothing more to say to him. He was silent. The Lord was also silent when standing before Pilate, Caiaphas and Ananias who interrogated Him. What self control that was, yet when asked one particular question by the chief priest he did answer. The reason was simple. The question was prefaced by the words, "I adjure thee" (Matt. 26:63), and being put under oath He had to answer.

- d) Lovely in His availability to help others.
 - i) The full loveliness of His availability is not only that He is available, but when He is available. It could be after a long day and evening of healing (Mk. 1:32-34) or more wonderfully when He came down from the mount of Transfiguration (Mk. 9:2-9; 15:27). On that mount Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke of His decease, then something happened. A cloud came down and from the cloud God began to speak saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5). How long it lasted we do not know but years later it was still fresh in Peter's mind (2 Pet. 1:16-18). What a high commendation and moment of glory when He was transfigured in glorious light. When they came down there was a man and a son who needed healing. It was then the Lord showed the loveliness of His availability, for in condescending grace He heals the child.

Concluding Thoughts

When I think of Christ on these levels, two questions come to mind:

- a) To what degree is He my Administrator in daily living? It is easy to sing, "He is Lord", but to what degree? Totally, or when it suits me.
- b) Is He really beautiful to me, and could He be more beautiful to my heart and mind? If so, "how?" He can only be beautiful and attractive to me to the extent that I am conformed to the image of God in the beauty of His holiness.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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