

1) Readings

Colossians 1:18
3 John. 1:9

2) Introduction

The word Preeminence is used twice in the New Testament: “That in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18), and “Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence” (3 Jn. 1:9).

- a) It is evident that these two are in sharp contrast for not only are the words different (“proteui” Col. 2:18), and “philoproteuo” (3 Jn. 1:9), but the attitudes of the two persons are opposites. The word “philoproteuo” means ambitious of position, “proteui” means “to hold the first place”. When it is told of Christ having preeminence, this is the God who took on humanness, who humbled Himself (Phil. 2:7); called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23); and endured the shame of the cross (Heb. 12:2). A man who loved the sheep and His own more than self glory (Jn. 10:11,14). It is the place God had given to Him whereas in Diotrephes, it is a man who exalted himself, who loved self and position more than the saints, and sought to split them into groups ignoring apostolic authority (3 Jn. 1: 10).

3) The Vastness Of The Themes

- a) There are a number of distinguishing titles used of the man Jesus which convey His preeminence, of which the following are just a few. Titles such as:
- i) “Author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9)
 - ii) “The Arm of the Lord” (Isa. 53:1)
 - iii) “The Messenger of the Covenant” (Mal. 3:1)
 - iv) “Beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17)
 - v) The “Bright and Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16)
- These and many more convey His preeminence.
- b) There are celebrated claims made by Christ which convey His preeminence, such as:
- i) The “Bread of God” (Jn. 6:33)
 - ii) The “Light of the world” (Jn. 8:12)
 - iii) “The Door” (Jn. 10:7-9)
 - iv) “The resurrection and the Life” (Jn. 11:25)
- These and many more convey His preeminence.
- c) There are offices He holds in perfection that none else could hold, such as:
- i) “Advocate” (1 Jn. 2:1)
 - ii) “Apostle and High Priest” (Heb. 3:1)
 - iii) “Blessed and only Potentate” (1 Tim. 6:15)
 - iv) The “Head” (1 Cor. 11:3)
 - v) “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (Rev. 19:16)
 - vi) “Prince of the Kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5)
 - vii) The “Faithful witness” (Rev. 1:5)
 - viii) “Image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15)
- These and many more convey His preeminence.
- d) There are several prefix’s in the scriptures which convey the truth of the preeminence of Christ. Prefix’s such as “fore” and “first”. We read of the Lord as:
- i) The “Forerunner” (Heb. 6:20)
 - ii) The “Firstborn” (Rom. 8:29)
 - iii) “First begotten” (Rev. 1:5)
 - iv) “Firstfruits” (1 Cor. 15:20)

- e) Of course we must look beyond the words “fore” and “first” and consider functions by which He is “first”:
- i) He was the first and only person to be:
 - 1. Born a King (Matt. 2:2) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 2. Born “holy” (Lk. 1:35) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 3. A priest “after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 7:11, 17) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 4. A sinless and perfect man (Heb. 7:26) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 5. A Prophet, Priest and King (Deut. 18:15; Zech. 6:13; Matt. 2:2) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 6. Anointed by God (Heb. 1:9)
 - ii) First and only person to:
 - 1. Ride an unbroken colt (Lk. 19:30) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 2. He never saw corruption (Acts 2:27) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 3. Rise from the dead never to die again (Rom. 6:9; Heb. 7:16; Rev. 1:18) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 4. Be raised by God (Acts 3:15; 13:30; Rom. 10:9) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 5. Be exalted by God (Phil. 2:9) and that gives Him preeminence
 - 6. Have God as the doctor at His birth (Psa. 22:9; 71:6) and that gives Him preeminence
 - iii) He was first to enter within the veil (Heb. 6:19-20). He is not the only one in this case for we shall be with Him and that gives Him preeminence
 - iv) He was the first and only person never to be at any point a dying man (Jn. 10:18) and that gives Him preeminence

4) The Meaning Of “Preeminence”

- a) To be “preeminent” means to be or have a status of transcendency, distinction, superiority, and excellence. Because of their paramount indescribable glory, they are worthy of acknowledged praise. In the above references this is true of the Lord, but while Diotrephes held the place of distinction in the church, it was not because of excellence, and instead of being worthy of praise he deserves disdain.

5) By What Authority Is He Given Preeminence?

- a) It is a fact that the weight of distinguishing is determined by personal character, or achievement, or the authority and glory of the distinguisher. In the case of Christ, the One who gives Him preeminence is God, for it is He who:
- i) Raised Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:21)
 - ii) Saluted Him (Heb. 5:10). The word “called” indicates to be named, saluted, a formal recognition)
 - iii) Exalted Him (Phil. 2:9)
 - iv) Acknowledged Him as in His rightful place (Heb. 1:13)
 - v) Let Him take the book from His right hand (Rev. 5:7)

With such an endorsement who would debate or deny His preeminence?

6) “In What Ways Is He Preeminent?”

The following table gives avenues by which I am aware of such a truth.

| He is Preeminent in: | References |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Administration | Eph. 1:22 |
| Adjudication | Jn. 5:22 & 27 |
| Arrangement | 1 Cor. 11:3 |
| Attraction | Song of Sol. 5:11-16 |
| Authority | Matt. 28:18 |
| Distinction | Hebrews, the entire book |
| Exaltation | Isa. 52:13 |
| Exultation | Rev. 5:9-13 |
| Glorification | 1 Pet. 3:22 |
| Intention | Psa. 2:6 |
| Justification | 1 Tim. 3:16 |
| Liberation | Gal. 5:1 |
| Perfection | Psa. 24:3-4 |
| Preservation | Jude 24 |
| Proclamation | Heb. 5:6 |
| Qualification | Rev. 5:7 |
| Representation | Heb. 7:25 |
| Revelation | Jn. 14:9 |
| Resurrection | Col. 2:15 |
| Salutation | Heb. 5:5-6 |

7) Conclusion

Such is the fulness of the Lord that no language nor combinations of languages can convey the wonders of the Lord. No created mind has the ability to comprehend and no tongue has the ability to declare the glories of the Lord.

My privileged place is to bow before Him in wonder and adoring worship.

**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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