

COLOSSIANS: STABILITY BY CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY AND SUPREMACY

Part II: Stability Through Understanding Christ's Equality With And Subjection To The Father (Colossians 1:3, 15-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Today's unsettling, insecure world has led many believers to become equally unsettled and insecure, so the need exists for us believers to focus on the stability and security we have in the Lord.
- B. The Colossian epistle presents Christ's all-sufficiency and supremacy in ways that settle and provide security, and one way it does is by teaching Christ's equality with and subjugation to the Father versus the Arian heresy that asserts Christ's subjugation to the Father reflects His inferiority to the Father and hence His lack of deity.
- C. Colossians 1:3, 15-17 counters the Arian heresy, and presents the true view of the Persons of the Godhead:

II. Stability Through Understanding Christ's Equality With And Subjection To The Father, Col. 1:3, 15-17.

- A. The Apostle Paul at Colossian 1:3 wrote that he gave thanks "to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," a statement that can leave a reader asking that if God the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ, is Christ then **less** than the Father and **thus NOT** eternal God (as claim Jehovah Witnesses and others of the Arian heresy).
- B. We respond to this concern by noting that Colossians 1:15-17 in the same context of the epistle asserts the eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (as follows):
 1. Colossians 1:16 asserts that the Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. v. 13), created all things, be they in heaven or in the earth, visible and invisible, and that all things were created by him and for him.
 2. It is impossible for a being to create himself, so Jesus Christ is not a created being, but the Eternal God.
 3. [This truth is supported further at Colossians 2:9 where Paul claimed that in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. That is, in His earthly body in the Incarnation, Jesus Christ was fully the Eternal God on the earth while also being fully man in having taken upon Himself humanity. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Colossians 2:9)]
- C. However, we need to clarify how Scripture presents the Father as being "greater" than Christ in the special administrative relationship between the members of the Triune Godhead (as follows):
 1. The term "firstborn" is used of Christ in Colossians 1:15 where He is called (literally in the Greek text) "the firstborn of all creation," Ibid., ftn. to Colossians 1:15. This does not mean Jesus came into existence to be "born" of God the Father as to His preincarnate deity, but that "the Son has all the rights belonging to the firstborn, because of His preeminent position over all creation (v. 16)," Ibid., ftn. to Colossians 1:15.
 2. Christ is **eternally "God the Son"** simply because He proceeded from God the Father in coming to the earth in the Incarnation, but He is eternally co-equal with the Father, cf. Philippians 2:5-7a. (Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, 1973, vol. I, p. 313-314) This is why John 3:16 claims that God (the Father) so loved the world that He sent His only unique (*monogenes*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 330) Son into the world, for Christ was **already eternally "God the Son"** prior to His Incarnation!
 3. The reason Christ proceeded from the Father as "God the Son" is based on the eternal **administrative** arrangement between the Father and Son where the Son is subject to the Father by mutual consent, just as the Holy Spirit is subject to both the Father and the Son by mutual consent, cf. John 15:26; 16:7.
 4. However, Christ is **"the Son of God"** since, in taking on Himself humanity, He took on the nature of humanity that is subject to God, leaving Him speaking of the Father as "My Father and My God" in the same sense that we human believers refer to God as "our Father and our God," John 20:17. Christ's reference to the Father as "My Father and My God" was thus spoken **only** by His **humanity!** (Ibid., p. 314)

Lesson: (1) *Contrary to the Arian heresy that holds that Jesus Christ was a created being so that He is not the Eternal God, Scripture teaches that Christ is the Eternal God Who created all things for Himself.* (2) *However, Christ is eternally "God the Son" in His administrative subjection to the Father by mutual consent, thus coming to earth in obedience to the Father's commissioning to take upon Himself humanity to work our salvation.* (3) *Then, as the God-man Incarnate, He is now the "Son of God," and in His humanity subjects Himself to God as His Father and His God.* (4) *God the Holy Spirit Who is co-equal and co-eternal with both God the Father and God the Son, is administratively subject to BOTH the Father AND the Son by mutual consent.*

Application: (1) *May we hold to the Eternal Deity and Sonship of "God the Son."* (2) *May we hold to Christ as the "Son of God" Who in His humanity is subject to the Father, calling Him "My Father and My God."*