

The entirety of this passage is emphasizing the possession of salvation in the hands of the one in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Outline:

1. Jesus is Supreme in Salvation (vs. 19-20)

Main Point: *It was God's sovereign will and pleasure to be incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ through the virgin birth and it was God's sovereign will and pleasure to reconcile all things to himself through Christ.*

- **"For in him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell..."**
 - i. The fullness of time. - **the incarnation**
 - ii. The Son of God for whom and through whom all things are created and sustained became a man in his incarnation. Never ceasing to be God, he "took on himself the form of a servant," meaning that Jesus, while never ceasing to be God, became a man, with a real human nature.
 - iii. The Son of God, eternally existing, stepped down into time, became a man, and was born of a virgin, in Bethlehem around 2000 years ago.
 - iv. Hebrews 2:17 - 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
 - v. Colossians 2:9 summarizes this – in him the fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Application/Explanation – Brothers and sisters, in this context, we find that Paul is emphasizing the supremacy of Jesus in his work – here in the beginning of vs. 19 – that Paul is narrowing down his focus from the grand, cosmic picture of Jesus and bringing **us front row center to the ultimate display of Jesus' supremacy – It was the pleasure of God's will that Jesus be fully God and fully man. Who is like Jesus? Who is like the Son of God made in every respect like his brothers? Think of all of the human beings of all of history – who has ever done what Christ has done? Who is greater than him? The answer is: no one! THERE IS NONE LIKE CHRIST! He is supreme in his uniqueness – no one is greater than him in person nor in their works!**

- **"and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth, or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."**
 - i. Possession - all of salvation belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. *Him, himself, his cross*
 - ii. **There is no part of the work of Redemption that doesn't belong to Jesus Christ: He is the only Redeemer.**
- i. **All things:** Jesus is the one who is making all things new and will bring the new heavens and the new earth, and He will come to judge the living and the dead.
 - a. Reconciliation comes in two ways: first, in the positive sense of reconciling to bring about a state of peace, and friendship. This is the reconciliation that believers have with God through Christ Jesus – we are no longer enemies, but friends of God, yet more, even children of God.
 - b. The second form of reconciliation is that in the like manner of reconciling accounts – if you owe the bank money, they will find you, and they will reconcile your accounts somehow – whether by garnishing your wages, or potentially taking legal action against you, your account will be reconciled. So even sinners, who reject the gospel, reject Christ,

- and the wrath of God abides on them, will have their accounts reconciled through forced submission to Jesus Christ at His return, and their eternal punishment in hell.
- c. Either way, the entirety of creation, will be put under the rule of Christ the King whether as justified, sanctified believers, or righteously punished sinners, who will bow the knee to Christ no matter what at Jesus' return.
- ii. The narrowing focus on the supremacy of Christ even further now, from his life, to one singular event -
 - i. The contrast of Christ the exalted King bringing peace as a man, through **the blood of his cross**.
 1. The text here narrows down its focus to a singular point in history: The sovereign, supreme, all powerful creator, the Son of God, takes upon human flesh, becomes a man, with a human nature, who's perfect life has one final destination: his cross.
 - ii. Contrast of cosmic power to the pause of a moment- the flowing of the blood of Christ -
 - iii. Magnifies the awe of the work of Christ -
 1. The bloody work of Christ - the good pleasure of the will of God was to reconcile his people to himself through the blood of his Son.
 2. Isaiah 53:10-11 - the will of the Lord to crush His Son, but it was the pleasure of the reconciliation of His people that drove Christ to satisfaction and joy in obeying God the Father.
1. Jesus is Supreme over **Your Salvation** (vs. 21-22)
 - i. Where do you and I fit into the cosmic drama of the sacrificial death of Christ, the Son of God?
 1. Our answer is found here: "and you,"
 2. Paul turns the focus now on the subject of Christ's work – believers.
 3. This is all about Christ's work for YOU – this couldn't be more applicable, this couldn't be more timely, this couldn't be more fitting, more pointed – Paul points the arrow of the work of Christ straight to the hearts of the Colossian readers, and thus to you and I.
 - ii. He reminds us of our sinful state of rebellion against God by using three descriptive words and phrases:
 1. Alienated, hostile in mind, and doing evil deeds.
 - a. Status: Alienated means to be separated, counted as an alien or separated
 - a. Paul uses this word in Ephesians 4:18 –
 - a. "They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart."¹
 - b. Your status as an unbeliever is not as a child of God. No, in fact you are born into a state of hostility against God, your status was that of an alien – you were outside of the life of God, your heart was blind and hard, unreceptive to spiritual truth, and you were a declared enemy of God. Your status was firmly set – as

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 4:18.

separated from God by sin with no human remedy for your status.

- b. Thinking: *hostile in mind*
 - a. The words here indicate that the former status of believers are enemies in their minds against God.
 - b. Literally, here we could say that Paul is stating that all of us, before we came to Christ, were literally enemies of God in every thought and attitude of our mind.
 - c. As the men and women of Noah's day, so are we before we know Christ, every inclination of our hearts is evil continually.
- c. Acts: *doing evil deeds*
 - a. This is the natural outflow of a rebellious, hate filled heart – evil deeds.
 - b. Paul is emphasizing the darkness of the sinful condition of the Colossians, and so ours, before their coming to Christ.

Application/ Explanation –

Oh, how dark the sinfulness of man. In order that we make no mistake in the understanding of our own condition before knowing Christ, the Holy Spirit makes it clear to us here that human beings outside of Christ are at their core, sinful, haters of God. You say, "I never hated God," but Scripture corrects you here; although you may not have ever had the singular thought, "I hate God," your actions prove the condition of your heart. Every sin of an unbeliever is an act of defiance against the Lord. This is not the most flattering image of us. This is not the image of us we like to think of – nor remember. But Paul is crying out to the Colossians for them to remember that their entire way of life was as a hostile enemy of God, alienated from the life of God, and outflowing from that hatred and enmity against God, flowed evil works.

When says here, "and you," He is speaking to us! Don't let your heart be fooled into thinking you were the one diamond in the rough that God saved! Explanation – "the last coca-cola in the desert." Should we dwell on the sins of our past? No, but we should remember our status, and our rebellious, God-hating hearts. Remember, we are not inherently good – human beings are not basically good. The words here for "hostile in mind" actually lend themselves to war-type language. Our hearts are so hostile it is as if, from the moment we are conceived, we are sharpening our spears to be at war with God. No friendship exists in the mind of the unbeliever with Jesus – they are hostile, enemies in their thinking and attitudes – unwilling to have anything to do with the real Jesus.

Transition: But you who were alienated from God – God, the offended party, has done something about this.

Vs. 22 – "he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him," ²

- 2. The words here brothers and sisters for "he has now reconciled" indicate that it is God doing this action, not us. In fact, it is Christ himself doing this action, because we see that it's "his body of flesh." This is an action that has taken place, it has been done for you, by Christ.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Col 1:22.

- i. Christ is supreme in your salvation in the HE is the one who has accomplished your reconciliation. The eternal Son of God, stepped down into time, to reconcile you to God.
- ii. How did he do this?
 1. "in his body of flesh by his death."
 2. You, who hated God, were loved by Christ – and he died to purchase your complete and sufficient reconciliation.
 3. The penalty due to rebels, haters of God, was put upon the person of Jesus Christ in his very body.
 - a. 1Pe. 2:24
 - a. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,³
 - b. **A glimpse of Christ trading his life for yours –**
 - a. Mark 15:33-34 – The alienation of Christ from His Father.
 - b. ³³ And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"⁴
 4. Paul is now applying that bloody, dark moment in history to the Colossians – he is drawing their thoughts, minds, desires beyond themselves to gaze at the awesome work of Christ.
- iii. And look at the results of His work –
 1. Holy, blameless, and above reproach –
 2. Christ reconciled us and secured our absolute blameless state before God the Father.
 - a. Ephesians 5:25b-27 –
 - a. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ⁵
 3. The work of Christ has reconciled us for all time with God –
 - a. Rom. 5:1
 - a. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶
 - b. The reality here is that Paul is setting Christ up as supreme over the entire life of the believer now as well – from the beginning of your Christian life, to the end Christ is supreme over all. He has purchased your eternal state with God – you are counted as above reproach before God the Father. He has also already purchased our holiness, and blamelessness by the power of his blood. There is no additive to the Christian life, there is no, "get saved, then add this," there is no aspect

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Pe 2:24.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mk 15:33–34.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 5:25–27.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 5:1.

of salvation that comes to us outside of Jesus the Son of God. The day you stand before the judgment seat of Christ – you will be presented holy, blameless, and above reproach before him.

- c. There is no more fear, salvation is finished – reconciliation is accomplished in Christ.

Transition: Now, the final question is, *how can someone be sure they have Christ? What must I do to be saved? How can I know if I have what is described here?*

Brothers and sisters, we now see perhaps the most important part of this sermon: All of these things are yours if you cling to the gospel in faith.

Christ, who is the center of the gospel is alive from the dead, as a sign to all creation that God has anointed Him Lord and Savior. If you today hear my voice, you are now under the divinely ordained obligation to respond.

- If you are a believer, the Lord’s word is: cling to Christ through believing the gospel.
 - i. Paul’s command here is for you to be **“stable and steadfast.”**
 1. You shouldn’t be constantly shifting as a believer, but let yourself be rooted deep down in the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 2. Gaze at Christ, brothers and sisters, and cling to Him. Don’t let anyone ever tell you that you must turn to Christ, then add anything else. Faith and repentance are inseparable yes, and part of clinging to Christ is letting go of sin. But repentance is not a “meritorious work” it is a change of mind, a response of faith. No, the false teachers in Colossae were teaching that salvation needed to be gained through self depravation and worship of angels, and following of Jewish festivals.
 3. Paul is looking at them and says, **“you continue in the faith.”**
- If you are an unbeliever, the Lord’s word to you is: repent and believe, and run to Jesus Christ.
 - i. Paul was a minister of this gospel, and the same gospel Paul preached, we preach. If you want to be reconciled to God, repent and believe in Jesus Christ.
 1. Put your trust in Him, he has accomplished everything in order to bring any who come to him to salvation. He will save, and save completely those who run to him in faith.

Christ the King, who is supreme over all things will bring peace, one way or another. To those who believe in him, He brings reconciliation and peace with God forever by applying his blood to their account and saving them. To those who choose not to receive him, but reject the only Son of God, when Christ the King Supreme returns to set up His Kingdom their knees will bow, and tongues will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, but then, there will be no mercy – the time is now, trust in Christ.