

Wednesday

February 18

The "Beginning" (and Initiator)

Read Colossians 1:18. What is the connection between the idea of Christ as the head and Him as the "beginning"?

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18 KJV

In Hebrew the words for head (*ro'sh*) and beginning (*rē'shîṭ*) are related. The first instance of the latter word in Scripture is in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning [*rē'shîṭ*] God created the heaven and the earth." Jesus is head

of humanity and of the church, not only because of the Incarnation but also because He is the Creator.

WE SEE THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF COL 1 (VERSES 16, 17).

"For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17 ESV)

In Greek, the word for beginning (*archē*) has a broad meaning. Here "beginning" refers to Jesus as the source or initiator of the church (Col. 1:18), and therefore its Head, just as He is the "beginning" or initiator of creation.

Jesus is not only the initiator in terms of creation and the church, He is also—through His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 6:3, 4)—the initiator of the new creation. Because the wages of sin is death, His victory over death also shows His victory over sin and shows His power to re-create us in His image. All this demonstrates why He is “the firstborn from the dead” (on the meaning of “firstborn,” see Monday’s study). His is the preeminent resurrection, even though not the first (Moses was the first, which is why the dispute with the devil ensued over his body [Jude 9]). Without Christ’s resurrection, no one else could be raised from the dead.

It's helpful at this point to review briefly all the reasons Paul has given for Jesus having preeminence:

1. He is the perfect manifestation of the invisible God. COL 1:15

2.He is the agent by whom all things were created. COL 1:16

3.He existed before all things, and all things are brought together in Him. COL 1:17

4.He is the head of the church, which is His body. COL 1:18

5.He is the initiator of creation and the re-creation. COL 1:18

6.He has conquered sin and death and thus earned the right to resurrect all who put their trust in Him as Savior.COL 1:13

7.Jesus has always existed, but now, by virtue of all this, He has come to have the preeminence as Head of humanity and Head of the church. COL 1:17, 18

What must you change so that you can better experience Christ's preeminence in your own life?

GOD WANTS TO CHANGE THE WAY WE VIEW THE GOSPEL
SO THAT WE DO NOT ASK SO MUCH WHAT WE MUST DO
BUT RATHER WHAT GOD HAS DONE THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST FOR ALL MEN. IF CHRIST IS INDEED THE
PERFECT MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFT OF GOD.

IF CHRIST IS THE AGENT THROUGH WHICH ALL THINGS
WERE CREATED. IF HE EXISTED BEFORE ALL THINGS
AND ALL THINGS ARE BROUGHT TOGETHER IN HIM. IF
CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, HIS BODY; THE
INITIATOR OF CREATION AND RE-CREATION. IF HE
ALONE HAS CONQUERED SIN AND DEATH AND ALONE HAS
THE RIGHT TO RESURRECT ALL AND ESPECIALLY THOSE
WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN JESUS. IF JESUS IS THE
PREEMINENT HEAD OF HUMANITY AND OF THE CHURCH.
THEN IT IS TO JESUS ALONE AND NOT US OR THE ARM
OF FLESH, OR OUR WORKS, WISDOM OR RIGHTEOUSNESS
THAT WE MUST SURRENDER OUR SOVEREIGN WILL.

ANYTHING SHORT OF THIS FULL SURRENDER OF THE
HUMAN TO THE DIVINE IS THE GREATEST SCANDAL IN
HEAVEN AND EARTH AND WORTHY OF OUR CONTEMPT AND

DISTAIN. BECAUSE ANYTHING SHORT OF THIS GLORIOUS
GOSPEL IN JESUS CHRIST IS SIMPLY A BURDEN NOT
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

JEREMIAH 23:29-