



THE
SUPERIOR WORD
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COLOSSIANS

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For it pleased *the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell*, Colossians 1:19

The construction of the words of this verse leave it open as to the identification of the subject. The words, "the Father" are inserted here. Some translations state, "God," or even "the Godhead." Others leave any insert out. The Father is referred to in verse 12 where Paul acknowledges "giving thanks to the Father." However, the term "God" is used in verse 15 where it says, "He is the image of the invisible God." As this is the nearest antecedent, and as "God" is at other times referring to the Father, it appears to be a better choice to fully define what is on Paul's mind.

Further, Colossians 2:9 states, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily..." This is speaking specifically of Christ as well, and so Paul was probably thinking of the Godhead, or Deity, here in 1:19 as well. With this understanding, the verse can be logically evaluated.

"For it pleased" shows that what has come about in Christ was something satisfying to God. Everything about the exaltation of Christ which has been seen in the preceding verses was by the design, and with the approval, of God. Christ Jesus' preeminence in all things was God's intent all along. This is revealed through the words that "in Him all the fullness should dwell." The *pleroma*, or fullness," refers to all of the divine attributes and the essential nature of the Godhead. Everything about God that can be revealed to us is done so through Christ Jesus. He is the focal point for us to understand God, fully and completely. It is through Him that God will ceaselessly and endlessly reveal Himself to us. This is fully supported by the words of Revelation 21 –

"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light." Revelation 21:22, 23

What God reveals of Himself is done through the Lamb. Thus God's light of revelation is fully expressed to us through Christ Jesus. This was what Jesus was telling the apostles in John 14:9, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." The fullness of the Godhead is

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seen and expressed to us through Jesus Christ because it dwells in Him. The word Paul uses for “dwell” is one which indicates settling down as a permanent resident. Jesus didn’t temporarily receive the fullness of the Godhead, but He possesses it completely and eternally. He is God’s permanent focal point for revealing Himself to us.

Life application: God has chosen to reveal Himself in His fullness through Jesus Christ. To deny the deity of Christ is to deny the truth of God. One either has the Son, which includes the fullness of God, or they do not have God. It is that plain and that simple. Don’t resist God any longer, but rather yield yourself to the Son and, in turn, be pleasing to God the Father.

and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20

For context, the previous verse needs to be cited with this one -

“For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

The words, “and by Him” are thus speaking of Christ Jesus while the words, “to Himself” are speaking of God of the previous verse (remembering that the words “the Father” are inserted, but are speaking of God as the Father). The means by which God is reconciling all things to Himself is through Christ Jesus.

Here the term *ta panta*, or “all things,” is brought in again. All things which are to be reconciled are done so through Christ Jesus. Paul then follows this up with the words, “whether things on earth or things in heaven.” The intent here is that there is a need for reconciliation between the earthly and the heavenly things. As Albert Barnes notes, “The meaning is not, that ‘the things in heaven’ were alienated from God, but that there was alienation in the universe which affected heaven, and the object was to produce again universal concord and love.” This sentiment is found elsewhere, such as in Ephesians 1:10 –

“...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”

Through Christ, there is this gathering together of all things. In Him the fracture is healed and peace is restored. God has done this, “having made peace through the blood of His cross.” The words “the blood of His cross” are given to mean the blood that He shed on

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the cross. The blood and the instrument which caused it to be shed are almost tied together as one in Paul's mind. God chose the cross to be the means by which Christ's blood would be shed, thus the cross stands as the symbol of what occurred. When we look to the cross, we look to the symbol of our faith which represents the blood that was shed.

It is through this instrument of death that life and reconciliation come about. It is through the cross that peace is realized. The blood of His cross then is a term which is linked to the thought of atonement, redemption, and propitiation as is spoken of in Romans 3 -

“...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Romans 3:24-26

One thing that must be understood from this verse is that “all things” must mean “all things” just as it did before. Paul uses the same Greek term, *ta panta*, in verses 16, 17, and 18. It would not be logical to think that he suddenly means something different here than he did in those verses, because they are all connected to the same overall thought concerning Christ. Understanding this, while at the same time taking in the whole counsel of Scripture, the idea of reconciling all things through Christ must include the thought of condemnation, not merely salvation.

All things are potentially reconciled through Christ's cross. Not all things are actually reconciled though, at least not in the same way. God reconciles His faithful through salvation; God reconciles those who are at enmity with Him through condemnation. God has set forth the cross of Christ as the means of reconciliation, while faith in that cross is the mode by which it comes. Without faith, the potential reconciliation is not realized, and thus only condemnation is left.

Life application: When we look to the cross, we are looking to the instrument by which God has brought us back to Himself. When we boast in the cross, we are not boasting in an idol, rather, we are boasting in the highest act of God's love for mankind. The cross stands as a symbol and a banner for the work of Jesus Christ. Let us not be confused about the meaning of the cross. Rather, let us boast in it because in so boasting, we are exalting the work of God in Christ.