

Colossians

Painting a picture of Jesus 1:15-23



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Hints and Highlights

1. It is vital to remember the context of any passage, especially in Paul's letters. Paul has been praying they would increase in knowing Jesus. He now begins to describe who Jesus is and what he did in more detail. What an awe-inspiring picture Paul paints!
2. Note—the word “image” means “representation, reflection, likeness”. The only way God could be seen is by adding to his essence humanity in Jesus.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Have each person in the group draw a picture of the leader. Then discuss how close the picture is to reality.

Option 2:

Play a game of Pictionary.

Option 3:

Have each person draw a picture of the person next to them. Then put the pictures in a pile and have each person guess who each picture is. The one who gets the most right wins a prize.

- What makes a good picture?
- Why is it so difficult to paint an accurate picture of someone?
- Why is it so difficult to paint an accurate picture of God?

The Bible paints a picture of God by describing Jesus. Let's take a closer look at the painting Paul makes in his letter to the Colossians.

Diving In

Read 1:15-20

1. Take a moment and jot down any observations you learn about Jesus. What are some things that strike you about Jesus from this description?
2. Let's dig in a little deeper here. If God is invisible what do you think it means that Jesus is his image? (note—the key is to pull out that Jesus is God made flesh—you can look at John 1:14 for more insight)
3. What do you think Paul means by the firstborn of creation? (note this does not mean Jesus was the first created thing, but having precedence over creation) What do you think is the significance of Jesus creating everything?
4. What do you think it means that Jesus is “before all things”? What do you think it means that Jesus holds all things together? What do you think would happen if Jesus let go? What insights does this give us about Jesus?
5. What do you think it means that Jesus is the head of the church? Why do you think Paul calls the church the body of Jesus? How would the church be like a body? (note—the word “church” here refers to all followers of Christ—not a particular building or congregation)

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Hints and Highlights

1. This passage makes 12 claims about Jesus' deity: 1. Image of invisible God 2. First-born of creation 3. Creator of all things 4. Before all things 5. Holds together all things 6. Head of church 7. Beginning 8. Firstborn from the dead 9. Pre-eminent 10. Fullness of God 11. Reconciles 12. Makes peace
2. The idea of first-born of creation (v. 15) does not mean Jesus is the first creation. The rest of the verses make it clear this is another way of showing describing Jesus' preeminence.
3. The fullness of God means that Jesus is 100% God and 100% man. Philippians 2:6-11 can add insight here along with John 1:1-18. This is called the incarnation.
4. The necessity of continuing in the faith does not mean you can lose your salvation. It simply means that those who continue in the faith demonstrate the relationship they have with Christ.

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6. What do you think it means that Jesus is the beginning? The firstborn from the dead? That he is preeminent in all things? What is the significance of these claims (esp. firstborn from the dead)? What would Jesus be like if these things were not true? What are the implications if they are true?
7. What do you think it means that all of the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Jesus? What does it mean to reconcile? How does the fullness of Jesus' deity relate to his ability to reconcile all things to himself? Why could Jesus be the only person able to reconcile us to God?
8. How does the blood of the cross make peace? Why do you think blood and death were necessary to reconcile us? What does this tell us about Jesus? Why could only one who is both God and man reconcile us to God?

Read 1:21-23

1. How would you describe what Paul is saying in these verses? What insights does this give you about people? What is true of people apart from Christ? What does it mean to be alienated? Hostile?
2. What are some differences Christ's reconciliation make? What do you think it means to be holy or blameless? Does this mean believers never sin? Why or why not?
3. What does it look like to continue in the faith? (see side bar) How do we continue? What is the source of our hope? What does this tell us about the Gospel?

In Summary

1. Take a moment and think through the picture of Jesus that you learned here in this passage.
2. How has your view of Jesus changed? Which of the images of Jesus strikes you as significant?
3. What do you think it means that Jesus is 100% God and 100% man? Why is this so important?
4. What difference does Jesus make in people's lives? Why?

Making Application

Painting an accurate picture of Jesus will change your life.

1. Do I believe intellectually that Jesus is God? How is faith in Christ different than this intellectual understanding?
2. If Jesus rose from the dead, what implications does that have for my life?
3. What might cause us to shift our hope from the gospel to other things? How can this picture of Jesus Christ help us to keep our hope firmly in Him?
4. If Jesus is God, how should I worship Him? How does this affect my relationships? School? Future?

Let's thank Jesus for who he really is.