

# JESUS – FIRST PLACE

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## INTRODUCTION

Monday this week there were some sleepy faces around the office – it took me a while to work it out – the world cup final had meant some lost sleep. Well, I am totally ignorant about soccer – ball games in general don't interest me...that's just the way I am...sorry to say! So I neither knew who won the world cup, nor did it affect me in any way whatsoever. It was world headlines, and many millions of people stopped to watch – but in my world, it didn't even happen. Could there be something so overwhelmingly huge, that I, in my little bubble world don't see it or blindly pretend it is not even happening? Well, yes.

Let's read: **Col 1:15-19**

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him **all things** were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things** were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before **all things**, and in Him **all things** consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in **all things** He may have the preeminence. NKJV*

**'that in all things He, (Jesus) may have the preeminence'**

## 1. JESUS – FIRST PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

**Jesus – by Him everything in heaven and on earth was created**, visible and invisible. There is a visible universe He created...planets so huge that earth is infinitesimally small. And I, on this earth am even smaller by comparison. That's the visible part of the created universe. When Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians, little of that vast distant, huge universe could be seen, only what you see at night in a clear sky. But Jesus made it all, by His powerful Word.

Then there's the invisible part – thrones, dominions, principalities, powers – Jesus made it. **He made it for Himself.** Have you ever made anything? You would have, because you were made in His image, even though the image of God in us is marred because of sin. But when you make something, you are bound to it by a strong bond of creator/owner. That's why the mother/child bond is so strong. That's why we feel uncomfortable when someone makes a joke about the poem we wrote, or the go-kart we made – it's part of us, the creative nature. Jesus made the universe for Himself...with a great plan that was totally inclusive and self-less.

**It all (the universe, the world, you) holds together by Jesus – 'in Him all things consist'** (m. 'set together') – His Word upholds it all – the glue that holds the universe together is the Word of God. Jesus IS THE WORD – He, the Word, can never fail.

***Heb 1:1-3** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power***

.....Jesus is first in the universe.

## 2. JESUS – FIRST PLACE IN THE CHURCH

*'He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence'*

***Eph 4:14-16** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in*

*deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are **to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. ESV***

### **Jesus is first, the Head, over His body**

Your head has its place at the top of your body. Everything flows from your head. But it must be in place, connected. The body has to yield, work with the instructions, voluntary and involuntary, from the head. Some instructions just happen because everything is in its proper place in your body – your heart beats, your digestive system digests etc. So when Jesus' church body works with each member/system in place and taking instruction from the head, not from desires by parts of the body to be the head and 'call the tune' or 'do their own thing' – the body can do what its purpose is.

### **So what happens when Jesus is not first?**

#### **- in our personal lives –**

***James 3:13-17** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

Our desires war against God's purpose, and so we make ourselves the head, the first place...there is trouble – confusion and every evil thing. ***James 4:1-2** Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?* When we don't make Jesus first personally, it affects our whole life, our relationships in every area including church (because we are part of 'the body'), and it affects our future and our eternity.

#### **- in the church –** there is confusion, and every evil thing. We are working against God's purpose for His body if we don't personally and together, allow Jesus to be head, and surrender our personal desires, for the good of others, and the precious body of Christ. In a natural body, pain, injury and even death are the results of a head which is not in its proper place. We need to work at this in our lives. Our human nature says 'me, me, me' but Jesus...that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. Could it be that like me and the world cup soccer, we could be in our little personal world of 'me' and miss the big picture, the universe upheld by Jesus, the Word, the Creator, who has a plan involving me in His great body, showing His great wisdom to the ages.

Last week, Eileen Macdonald had a dream which she shared a little of at communion time. I spoke to her during the week, and she expanded a bit more for me. To remind us, this is how it went: She dreamed....

*She was doing communion at church – she turned up, and it was like a tv 'set'. She was told you are on in 3 minutes – so it was not a real situation, but a picture of something. She couldn't find her Bible – was it in her car? Her car was gone. She asked around – do you have a Bible? No, people only had kids books, with no words. She asked one lady 'do you have a Bible' but she said 'no, don't worry, it won't last long' (meaning the communion). She walked on (to the set?) – but was at a 'crossroads', with lots of traffic, a boat, motorcycle, lots of noise. One lady came up and said – 'this is freedom – freedom is being on a motorcycle'. She sped off – Eileen was trying to say 'come in here' but she was gone. Then – she started to try to talk – because the room was filled with all sorts of noise – gambling was happening behind her on stage and in back corner at entrance – roulette*

*tables etc –she was trying to talk but no-one could hear her - talking but no-one was paying attention – looking at everyone but she couldn't recognize anyone...*

Is it that in the house of God, people treat the Word of God like a children's book – they let no words speak to them personally. Could they just be coming to have their ears tickled, to be amused, entertained for a while and feel good before they sleep. It doesn't really change anything. Maybe there are many at a crossroads – where boats, motorcycles, tv, cars, gambling, busy-ness – things that are worldly-pleasure-seeking become the centre of their efforts, consume their world, make a noisy din, and even take over the centre place where Jesus should be the centre, be the head, in their lives. The Word of God, the communion (fellowship) – are not being focused on, and so the words are like children's stories to them – they can't hear or even get anything out of it.

Someone taught me in Sunday school when I was little: JOY – Jesus first, others second, yourself last – that is the secret to joy. Let's lift Jesus into His proper place, live to serve others as His body on earth, and then we will be truly filled with joy....

### **3. JESUS – FIRST FOREVER**

***And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence....***

Jesus being head in creation, holding it together, firstborn over all creation, firstborn from the dead....head over all things to His church, His body....is SO THAT....in everything He might have the pre-eminence....He has planned, and plans to use us to fulfil, carry out, demonstrate His first-place, pre-eminence over everything, forever....

***Eph 3:8-12 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,***

Do you get it? This is our purpose. We are His hands and feet, now, to demonstrate that He is first, pre-eminent in everything. Can people see it through us – here in church – and here in our world? Can people see that Jesus is the centre, Jesus is first place, when they look at us, His people, His body? We have some changes to make, don't we?

Yes, it's painful, giving up the 'me' centre. Jesus, in the garden, said 'Not my will Father, but Yours be done'. It is a painful, but totally worthwhile process, surrendering to the pre-eminence of Jesus. Join in the labour. All creation is in labour, waiting for us to be shown, manifested as His sons, His body on earth...but let's commit to it – (read v.10 above)...we have His power at work in us...His glory can, and will, be seen by the church here and forever....let's submit our will, give up 'me centre'. exalting Jesus as Head, and serve others as He would....

***Eph 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***