

Head of the Church (vv. 18-20)

VERSE 18 He is also head of the body, the church (καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας [*conj + pro.nom.m.s. autos + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. kephale head + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. ekklesia*]); **and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead** [ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, [*pro.nom.m.s. hos + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + noun nom.f.s. arche beginning + adj.nom.m.s. prototokos firstborn + prep ek + d.a.w/adj.abl.m.p. nekros dead*]], **so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything** [ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων [*conj hina so that + aor.dep.subj.3s. ginomai come, become + prep en + adj.loc.nt.p. pas + pro.nom.m.s. autos + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. proteuo have first place; only here*]].

VERSE 19 For [Since] it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι [*conj hoti because, since; "For" + prep en + pro.loc.m.s. autos + aor.act.ind.3s. eudokeo be pleased + adj.acc.nt.s. pas + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. pleroma fullness + aor.act.infin. katoikeo dwell, inhabit, live in*]),

VERSE 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself [καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν [*conj + prep dia through + pro.gen.m.s. autos + aor.act.infin. apokatallasso reconcile; v. 22; Eph. 2:16 + d.a.w/adj.acc.nt.p. pas + prep eis + pro.acc.m.s. autos*]], **having made peace through the blood of His cross** [εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, [δι' αὐτοῦ] [*aor.act.part.nom.m.s. eirenopoieo make peace + prep dia + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. stauros cross + pro.gen.m.s. autos*]]; **through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven** [[δι' αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς [*prep dia + pro.gen.m.s. autos + conj eite whether + d.a.acc.nt.p. "things" + prep epi + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. ge + conj eite or + d.a.acc.nt.p. "things" + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.m.p. ouranos*]].

ANALYSIS: VERSES 18-20

1. Paul now shifts the discussion from Christ's supremacy over the created order of things to Christ's sovereignty over the church (v. 18).
2. The conjunction "also" relates these two aspects of Christ's supreme celebrity status among all entities.
3. "The head" (headship) stands is with the definite article denoting absolute identification with the subject; Christ and Christ alone is to be identified with "the head."
4. "The head" points to the position of authority and power just as the Son of God is supreme over all creation.
5. Since the focus here is on the supreme authority of the head over the body, this should here be taken as an objective genitive: "the head that is sovereign over the body."
6. This metaphor of head and body is that of the common observation of the relationship between the physical head and the body.
7. Paul uses this metaphor in Rom. 12:4-5 and 1 Cor. 12:12 in presenting the human body with its various parts as illustrative of the spiritual gifts possessed by individual believers within each local church.
8. Here in Colossians the emphasis is on the church universal of which each local assembly is a microcosm.
9. "The church" is an exegetical genitive that provides further definition to "the body."
10. Again, in this setting this "church" is the church universal which includes all who are believers in the present dispensation, extending from Pentecost in 33 AD to the Rapture in 2021 AD.
11. This same ecclesiology is found in Ephesians (4:15; 5:23) as it relates to the church universal.
12. An instructive verse in this regard is 1 Cor. 11:3: "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man (*aner* male), and the man is the head of every woman (*gune* female), and God is the head of Christ."
13. This establishes a chain of command relative to the godhead and believers in a discussion of head hair and the divine institution of marriage within the local assembly.
14. By specifying that the head of the church is the Creator ('first cause') and Sustainer of the all things in the heavens and on the earth, Paul is indicating that the church holds an elite position in the plan of God.
15. As goes the head so goes the body; the two are inseparable and share the same privileges and glory!
16. In the 2nd phrase of v. 18 Paul relates all this to Christ's resurrection.
17. As in v. 15, the phrase opens with a relative clause ("who is the beginning").
18. This "beginning" (*arche*) is here specified under the rubric (an established pattern) "firstborn" (cp. v. 15b).
19. To refer to Christ as the "firstborn" is again to refer to His unique and supreme status.
20. In this instance the status has the temporal aspect—"firstborn from the dead."
21. In the first instance (v. 15) the emphasis is on Christ's deity; here it is on His humanity.
22. Jesus was the first to rise from the dead with an immortal body (cf. Acts. 26:23).
23. Paul teaches this same truth uses the expression "firstfruits" in 1Cor. 15:20.
24. "Firstfruits" is an agricultural phenomenon that points to a general harvest, which looks forward to the resurrection of the church and beyond thus eventually establishing "the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5-6).

25. Jesus' resurrection and ascension fulfilled Ps. 2:7 "You are My Son, today (April 3, 33 AD) I have begotten you."
26. "So that" (conj *hina*) denotes the divine decree with respect to the glorified God-Man.
27. This purpose clause along with the aorist subjunctive "might come" (*ginomai* become something) relates to the necessity of Christ's resurrection.
28. At Christ's resurrection He became officially supreme in the new order/creation.
29. In contrast "is" (*estin*) in v. 17a, which affirms Christ's supremacy in creation.
30. The participle "to have first place" (*proteuo* be above all else; only here) or "being supreme" is to be taken with the verb "he may become" (periphrastic construction).
31. "In all things" specifies the universality of Christ's supremacy.
32. The full realization of this comes with the establishment of the eternal kingdom on earth and in the new creation (of which He is the author).
33. Cf. Rev. 1:5 "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and released us from our sins by His blood—"
34. In v. 19 Paul asserts the fact that it was God's/the Father's "good pleasure" (aor.ind. *eudokeo*) to exalt His Son above every name that is named.
35. The verb here is used in connection with the God the Father's pronouncement at Jesus' baptism and at the Transfiguration (Matt. 3:17//Mk. 1:11//Lk. 3:22; Matt. 17:5; 2Pet. 1:17).
36. It is used of Christ in Matt. 12:18 where Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah: "BEHOLD, MY SERVANT IN WHOM MY SOUL is WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES."
37. This verb is used of the Father's granting the kingdom to believers in Lk. 12:32: "Do not be afraid little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom."
38. It is used of God's pleasure in the proclamation of the gospel (1Cor. 1:21 "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come* to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.").
39. It is used of God in a negation with respect to the Exodus Generation (1Cor. 10:5 "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased, for they were laid low in the wilderness."; also Heb. 10:30 "BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH, AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.").
40. It is used of God's placing Paul in the ministry (Gal. 1:16-17 "But when God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach among the Gentiles...").
41. Here God is the implied subject of this verb in keeping with Paul's emphasis on God the Son.
42. "In Him" refers to Jesus Christ and "all the fullness" (*pan to pleroma*) refers to the divine attributes existing in the glorified God-Man.
43. This is made quite clear from 2:9: "For in Him (Christ) all the fullness of the Godhead (*theotes* deity; only here) dwells (pres.ind. *katoikeo*) in bodily form (adv. *somatikos*; lx)."
44. "All the fullness" is a periphrasis (substitute) for God.
45. So Jesus Christ is the embodiment of full deity.
46. It further pleased God that "through Him" (*di' autou*) the estranged creation could be reconciled.
47. The rift between the Creator and the creation necessitated a process of reconciliation.

48. The verb (aor.infin. *apokatallasso*) occurs here and in v. 22 and Eph. 2:16 (“and might reconcile them both in one body through the cross, but it having put to death the enmity.”).
49. The noun *katallage* occurs in Rom. 5:10, 11; 11:15; 1Cor. 7:11; 2Cor. 5:18, 19, 20.
50. The process is initiated by the offended party not the guilty party (e.g., sinners; cf. Rom. 5:8, 10).
51. God the Father is the One who accomplishes reconciliation through His Son.
52. The accomplishment of this is what took place on the cross.
53. “Having made peace” (aor.part. *eirenopoieo* make peace; 1x) points to the fact that the estranged are enabled to establish a relationship with God.
54. “The blood of His cross” refers to the spiritual death of Christ during the three hours of darkness when He was subject to God’s wrath.
55. “All things” (*tan panta*) parallels “all things” in vv. 16 and 17.
56. Based on this “all things” refers to things animate and inanimate.
57. The personal focus is on humans; the impersonal is the inanimate creation that was made subject to a curse with the fall of angels and man.
58. Christ’ work on the cross is the basis for the pacification of divine righteousness as He paid a price for all the sins of mankind.
59. Christ’s death on earth has cosmic and universal significance as noted in the phrase “whether things on earth or things in heaven.”
60. The universal scope of Christ’s peacemaking act on the cross should not be taken as affirming the reception of salvation by all mankind, only that reconciliation is possible for all under the doctrine of unlimited atonement.

New Outlook (vv. 21-23)

VERSE 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds (Καὶ ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς [*conj + pro.acc.p. su + adv pote formerly + pres.act.part.acc.m.p. eimi + perf.pass.part.acc.m.p. apallotrioo alienate; Eph. 2:12; 4:18 + conj kai + adj.acc.m.p. echthros enemy + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. dianoa mind, thinking + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.p. ergon deed + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.s. poneros evil*]),

VERSE 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death (νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατήλλαξεν ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου [*adv nun now + conj de yet + aor.act.ind.3s. apokatallasso reconcile + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.s. soma body + noun gen.f.s. sarx flesh + pro.gen.m.s. autos + prep dia + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. thanatos death*]), **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach** [*παραστήσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ* [*aor.act.infin. paristemi present + pro.acc.m.s. su + adj.acc.m.p. hagios holy + conj + adj.acc.m.p. amomos blameless, without blemish + conj + adj.acc.m.p. anegkletos beyond reproach + prep katenopion in the presence of; Eph. 1:4; Jude 1:24 + pro.gen.m.s. autos*]]--

VERSE 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast (εἴ γε ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἐδραῖοι [*conj ei if + part ge indeed + pres.act.ind.2p. epimeno stay, continue + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. pisis + perf.pass.part.nom.m.p. themelioo establish firmly; cf. 1 Pet. 5:10 + conj + adj.nomm.p. edratos steadfast, firm; 1Cor. 7:37; 15:58*]),

and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard [καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὗ ἠκούσατε, [*conj + neg me + pres.pass.part.nom.m.p. metakineo shift, dislodge; “moved away” + prep apo from + d.a.w/noun abl.f.s. elpis hope + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. euangelion gospel +pro.gen.nt.s hos + aor.act.ind.2p. akouo hear*], **which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister** [τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, οὗ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος [*d.a.w/aor.pass.part.gen.nt.s kerusso proclaim + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. ktisis creation + d.a.loc.f.s. + prep hupo under + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. ouranos + pro.gen.nt.s. hos which + aor.dep.ind.1s. ginomai “made” + pro.nom.m.s. ego I + noun nom.m.s. Paulos + noun nom.m.s. diakonos minister*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 21-23

1. Paul now shifts the discussion back to the situation as it now pertains to the Colossians, having set forth the status of Christ as the supreme celebrity.
2. But first he describes their pre-salvation status in v. 21.
3. Vv. 21-23 constitute one long sentence.
4. There is a link here between reconciliation mentioned in v. 20 and the salvation of the Colossian saints.
5. But first Paul sets their salvation (reconciliation) in the context of the their pre-salvation plight.
6. “And you” refers specifically to the Colossians.
7. It is equally the situation that once faced all believers before salvation.
8. The adverb “formerly” or “once” (*pote*) with the present participle “were” or “being” is either a circumstantial participle (“although you were...alienated and hostile) or is to be taken in a temporal sense (“once”).
9. Either way the sense is that prior to their salvation the Colossians were “alienated” which is a perfect passive participle (*apallotrioo* here and in Eph. 2:12; 4:18).
10. Eph. 4:18 supplies an object for the participle---“the life of God.”
11. This is a description of the pre-salvation state brought about by the fall of Adam.
12. Mankind from birth is “in Adam” via spiritual death the consequence of possessing the genetically engineered STA (see doctrine of the STA).
13. Therefore all who are “in Adam” are by birth enemies of God, hence the “alienation” Paul speaks of here (cf. Rom. 5:10 “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”).
14. The words “and hostile in mind” is composed of two nouns.

15. “Hostile” is the term for an enemy (*echthros*) and “mind” (loc.f.s.w/d.a. *dianoia*) meaning “thinking” thus referring to one’s mental attitude governed by the ISTA and human viewpoint.
16. “Hostile in mind” looks at their status experientially (cf. Rom. 8:7;
17. The antagonistic mental attitude is here linked to overt behavior “*engaged* in evil deeds.”
18. The Greek phrase is: *en tois ergois tois ponois*.
19. This involves all manner of STA activity along with human good.
20. So the Colossians were hopelessly locked in this cycle until such time as they were evangelized.
21. “Yet now” (*nuni de*) views the situation that broke this cycle.
22. The adverb here is an emphatic from of *nun* (“now”).
23. So the contrast with the preceding “once.”
24. The gravity of their pre-salvation condition serves to magnify the new condition based on the concept of reconciliation.
25. The verb *apokatallauoo* (reconcile) is found here and in Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20.
26. In the Ephesians citation Paul specifies that reconciliation is tied to “the cross” and that Christ’s work on the cross has “put to death the enmity.”
27. The enmity is human sin.
28. The basis for said reconciliation is here expressed as “in His fleshly body through death.”
29. “Through” (prep *dia*) indicates instrumentality and “in” (*en*) refers to the object through which reconciliation was made possible.
30. “Fleshly body” of course refers to Jesus’ humanity that was in all respects like our yet without the STA.
31. “Death” refers not to Jesus’ physical death but to His spiritual death (separation) from God during the three hours of darkness when He was made sin for us (cf. 2Cor. “He (Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God (justification) in Him (positional sanctification).”).
32. In v. 22b Paul sets forth the challenge before the Colossians in light of their reconciliation (salvation adjustment).
33. “In order to present you before Him” (aor.infin. *paristemi* present, stand before) refers to their standing before God in judgment (Bema Seat) at the Rapture of the church (cf. Rom. 14:10; 2Cor. 4:14; Eph. 5:27).
34. “Before Him” comes at the end of the Greek of v. 22b (prep *katēnōpion* also Eph. 1:4 and Jude 1:24) and is only used in connection with our final evaluation.
35. “Him” refers to Jesus Christ as in all reference here to “He.”
36. Paul uses three adjectives to describe the hoped-for status of the Colossians at the Bema Seat.
37. “Holy” is often used as a synonym for believers (“saints”).
38. All who are believers will be “holy” based on Ph 3 sanctification of body, soul and spirit (cf. Eph. 5:27; cf. Heb. 3:1).
39. The word is used as well for experiential holiness (1Pet. 3:5).
40. “Blameless” (*amomos*) occurs 8x; Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:22; Heb. 9:14; 1Pet. 1:19; Jude 1:24; Rev. 14:5.
41. It is used of those who stand before Christ in judgment and who qualify for the prize (cf. Jude 1:24 “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.”; cf. Eph. 5:27; 1:4).

42. It is used of Christ in Heb. 9:14 and 1Pet. 1:19.
43. It is used of the 144,000 (Rev. 14:5).
44. It is used of Ph 2 in Phil. 2:15.
45. “Beyond approach” (*anegkletos*) occurs 5x: 1Cor. 1:8; Col. 1:22; 1Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6, 7.
46. Here and in 1 Corinthians it is used of Ph 3 achievement at the Bema (“He will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”).
47. In v. 23 Paul sets for the conditions for the achievement of “holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”
48. “If indeed” (*ei ge*) presents a precondition modifying “to present” in v. 22.
49. “If indeed” appears only in Paul, and it can denote both more probable (2Cor. 5:3; Eph. 3:2; 4:21) and less probable (Gal. 3:4).
50. The focus here is on the conditionality of the Colossians remaining faithful to the truth to the end of Ph 2.
51. To “continue in the faith” refers to Ph 2 adherence to the truth of Bible doctrine first introduced to the Colossians at gospel hearing.
52. “The faith” refers to the objective content of Christian doctrine as in 1Cor. 16:13; 2Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:23; 3:23; 6:10; Eph. 4:13; 1Tim. 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10, 21; 2Tim. 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:13; Jude 1:3.
53. It is used of faith in the active sense of believing truth (Phm. 1:6; Col. 1:4, etc.).
54. “Firmly established” (perf.pass.part. *themelioo*) occurs 5x: Matt. 7:25; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:23; Heb. 1:10; 1 Pet. 5:10.
55. As used here in connection with “the faith” see Eph. 3:17 and 1Pet. 5:10.
56. This term for stability in doctrine is paired with the adjective “steadfast” (*edraios* firm) occurs in 1Cor. 7:37; 15:58; Col. 1:23.
57. The first term refers to building a sound foundation in doctrine (cf. Matt. 7:25) and the second to staying the course come what may.
58. This concept is supported by a negative: “not moved away” (pres.pass.part. *metakineo* only here).
59. The stated object of the participle is “from the hope of the gospel.”
60. This “hope” refers to the promises associated with the salvation and maturity adjustments.
61. “Which you heard” recalls 1:5 and their introduction to the faith.
62. The statement “which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven” might seem a bit surprising in light of the fact that the gospel would continue reach new territories as yet untouched in Paul’s day.
63. Paul may very well be referring to the witness of the zodiac that teaches divine truth via the symbols set up by God.
64. The geographical expansion of the gospel continues forward the end of this age and beyond.
65. “Of which, I, Paul, was made a minister” acts as a segue to what immediately follows.
66. Paul says he is proclaiming this same gospel that has had universal exposure through time.
67. Cf. 1:7 for the label “servant/minister.”
68. Paul is saying that he is obedient to his calling and to the message of salvation.