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CHRISTOLOGY IN COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

by

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A research
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
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APPROVED BY

Major Professor:

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Summary of the Proposed Research

My proposal is to investigate the christological titles which appear in Colossians 1:15-20. I have chosen this study as a basis for the construction of an immigrant theology for my denomination in its "diaspora" situation.

The research will entail biblical induction and be theological description. I will examine the four specific titles in terms of their use in Scripture and the scholarly literature related to them. I have selected particularly Colossians 1:15-20 because this passage is one of the most important christological statements in the New Testament. The chosen christological titles are as follows:

Jesus Christ as "Image of God"

Jesus Christ as "First-born"

Jesus Christ as "Head"

Jesus Christ as "Premiere"

Method of Research

The basic method of research will involve careful study of the Greek New Testament and a comparison of theological assertions. I will examine the selected titles through the use of profitable tools, including commentaries,

lexicons, dictionaries, and topical references.

My research will include the synthetic and comparative study of several commentators. In order to complete this task, I will put specific emphasis on some selected commentaries and other selected materials which show the essence of christology in Pauline theology.

Procedure of Research

My procedure for the research will be restricted by the specific titles. In each chapter I will present a brief outline of the title, biblical citations of its use, and discuss its contribution to Pauline christology. When I finish each chapter, I will submit it to my advisor for his comments and indications. After all four titles of christology have been handled in this manner, a final and conclusive summary will be written as the final chapter of the finished report.

Proposed Final Form of Research

The final form of my research will be a research paper which contains eight chapters including introduction and conclusion. Chapter one and chapter eight will be an introductory outline and conclusive application. Chapters two to three will be consist of an introduction to Colossians and the study of Colossians 1:15-20. And chapters four to seven will be consist of a discussion and

presentation of the four christological titles.

Justification of Proposed Research

The justification for my proposed research can be explained by its practical value for me and others.

- (1) This research will constitute subsidiary materials for the formation of christology in Korean immigrant theology.
- (2) This research will be a help to others who are interested in this subject.
- (3) This research will advance my working knowledge of the Greek text.
- (4) This research will be an opportunity for reaffirmation to Jesus Christ personally.

Chapter 2

AN INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

The Epistle to the Colossians is usually grouped with Ephesians, Philipians, and Philemon. They are called the Prison Epistles. Paul is in prison (4:3,10,18, cf. Eph. 3:1,4:1,6:20, Phil. 1:18, Philem. 1,9,10,13), but we do not know where the prison is located. There are interrelationships between these letters. The matters of personal mention in Colossians continues in Philemon. The vocabulary used and dominant ideas are paralleled in Ephesians. However, in Ephesians the stress is upon the person of Christ in the ecclesiological aspect, whereas in Colossians the emphasis is on Christ's position in the cosmological aspect.

The Community in Colossae

A city of Phrygia, Colossae was located at the valley of the Lycus, a tributary of the Maeander. There were three neighboring cities in this valley: Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae. These three cities were very closely related geographically and culturally. They necessarily held constant intercourse with each other.¹

¹J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 2.

So Paul could say, "When this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea" (4:16). These three cities belonged to a region of frequent violent earthquakes. The Church in Colossians was destroyed by a great earthquake in the year 60 (Tacitus) or 64 (Eusebius).²

The Epistle to the Colossians supposes a powerful Jewish settlement in the province of Phrygia. In accordance with Josephus there were a lot of Jewish people in this area by the immigrant policy of Antiochus the Great.³

The community in Colossae was not founded by Paul himself, and he does not seem to have visited Colossae (2:1, cf. 1:4,7-9). The founder of the Colossian Church was presumably Epaphras, who was a native of Colossae (1:7, 4:12), one of Paul's converts at Ephesus during the three years there (Acts 19:10-26). He also preached the gospel in the neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis (4:13). The congregation of the Colossae Church was mainly composed of the Gentiles (1:21,27,2:13,3:5-7). It is possible that after Paul's departure from Ephesus (Acts 20:1) or during Paul's third mission (Acts 19:10) Epaphras went to Colossae and preached the gospel in the neighboring areas. Paul

²Ibid., pp. 38-39.

³William Whiston, trans., Josephus (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981), pp. 251-256.

received detailed information about Colossae from Epaphras in the prison (1:8). The report was good on the whole (1:4,6,8,2:5). But there were some troubles, and Paul was concerned about them.

The Heresy in Colossae

In the prison Paul heard serious news from Epaphras that false teachers had penetrated into Colossae and seduced their faith (2:4,8). The Epistle was written primarily to counteract this serious and dangerous false teaching. What was this false teaching? The answer to this question is not certain nor clear. But the Epistle itself offers a few clues of the affair in the main. It is possible that the heresy resulted in a denial Christ's divinity, because the Epistle treats the doctrine of Christ in such detail. Paul does say it was based on human tradition and the elemental spirits of the universe (2:8), worship of angels (2:18), worship of devil and powers in the heavenly places (1:16,2:10,15). It was something that could be called a philosophy (2:8). It took a serious view of specific days and ceremonies, that is, festivals, new moons, and sabbaths (2:16). It forcibly demanded ascetic commands (2:16,20-23). It seems likely it brought with it the peril of legalism. Perhaps the heresy was the incipient mysticism of Montanism or Gnosticism which flourished in the 2nd-century A.D. This possibility is reflected in the Colossian letter where

Paul warns against philosophy and vain deceit (2:8-10,18).⁴

The Structure of the Epistle

The general structure of this Epistle is much the same as that of Paul's other epistles, beginning with the introductory greetings, presenting doctrinal arguments and exhortations, and concluding with personal messages. It can be analyzed as follows:

1. The Preface (1:1-14)
 - A. Opening salutation (1:1-2)
 - B. Paul's thanksgiving for the Colossian saints (1:3-8)
 - C. Paul's prayer for the Colossian saints (1:9-14)
2. The Preeminent Glory of Christ (1:15-23)
 - A. His preeminent person (1:15-19)
 - B. His preeminent work (1:20-23)
3. The Presentation of Apostle's Office (1:24-2:7)
 - A. His ministry (1:24-29)
 - B. His concern (2:1-7)
4. The Profitable Warnings (2:8-23)
 - A. Warning on worldly instruction (2:8-10)
 - B. Warning on ritualism (2:11-17)
 - C. Warning on worship of angels and mysticism (2:18-19)
 - D. Warning on asceticism (2:20-23)

⁴Charles W. Carter, ed., The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Vol. V (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), p. 488.

5. The Practice of Christian Life (3:1-4:6)
 - A. Pure consecration (3:1-4)
 - B. Putting off the old man (3:5-9)
 - C. Putting on the new man (3:10-17)
 - D. Perfect Christian household (3:18-4:1)
 - E. Prayer and activity (4:2-6)
6. The Personal Conclusion (4:7-18)
 - A. Paul's messengers (4:7-9)
 - B. Friends' greetings (4:10-14)
 - C. Personal messages (4:15-17)
 - D. Farewell (4:18)

Chapter 3

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

This passage takes its place among other acclamations of the glorified Christ (Rom. 1:3f., Phil. 2:6-11, 1 Tim. 3:16, Heb. 1:3, 1 Pet. 2:22-25, 3:18f., 22). It speaks to the relation between the universe and Christ (1:15-17), and the relation between Church and Christ (1:18-20), so that the created universe and the redeemed Church are related through τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:3) and τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ (1:13).

The passage is generally regarded as a hymn. But the hymnic origin is questioned by C. F. D. Moule (pp. 59-62) and some other scholars. Guthrie presents some critical questions about the origin of the passage:

Was the passage composed by Paul, or was it already in use as an early liturgical Christian hymn which was then adapted by Paul, or was it in fact a pre-Christian hymn either adapted by Paul or interpolated into his Epistle?⁵

A. M. Hunter and J. G. Gibbs present some reasons to deny that the author of Colossians wrote this hymn, as follows:

(1) The formal literary style is different from its context.

(2) The hymn abounds in relative clauses.

⁵Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), p. 352.

(3) It contains five hapax legomena of Pauline usage (ὁρατά, θρόνοι, κυριότητες, πρωτεύων, εἰρηνοποιήσας).

(4) The passage contains an advanced christology.⁶

Many scholars have argued that this Colossians hymn is not Pauline. It might be an early Christian hymn of praise to Christ. No one knows exactly the original form of this hymn. It might be more shorter than its present context, Colossians 1:15-20, and it should be added intentionally and interpretatively by the author of the Colossians. I believe this Colossians hymn was not written originally by Paul himself nor he has not composed these verses. He just made use of the traditional hymn. And the hymn was not originally gnostic and baptismal usage. Lohse reveals his own explicit standpoint about this matter after examinations to the specific terms (including hapax legomena) which either do not appear at all elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, or are used otherwise with a different meaning. He says,

These observations exclude the possibility that the author of this letter could have composed these verses himself by using traditional phrases. Rather, this is a quotation from a primitive Christian song which celebrates the unique dignity of the exalted Lord.⁷

⁶Archibald M. Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 124-126.

John G. Gibbs, Creation and Redemption (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), p. 95.

⁷Eduard Lohse, Colossians and Philemon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 42.

In behalf of the theological understanding of Colossians 1:15-20 it is necessary to survey various approaches to the historical background of hymnal passages in the viewpoint of religious similarity. According to Sanders' study, M. Dibelius observed that this passage deals with "a cosmic speculation" and "a soteriological conception" that are prior to the "conceptual world of Paul."⁸ It is his position that the historical religious background of Colossians 1:15-20 is rather nearer to Hellenism than Gnosticism. He found the nearest parallel to Colossians 1:15-20 in Iranian religion.

In the Mandaean literature, the divine messenger Manda dHaije combines cosmological and soteriological functions, just as the redeemer here in Col. 1:15-20.... Dibelius argued, 'Paul sees his Christ in the place of the *κόσμος* of the Hermetic writings, the *κόσμος νοητός - λόγος* of Philo, and the primal Man of the "Iranian" texts.'

On the other hand, it is Käsemann's view that concepts related to the Archetypal Man who is the Redeemer and Sophia or Logos are combined in Colossians 1:15-20. He viewed it as a pre-Christian gnostic text which deals with the supra-historical and metaphysical drama of the gnostic Redeemer as a Jewish figure.¹⁰

⁸Jack T. Sanders, The New Testament Christological Hymns (London: The Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 75.

⁹Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁰Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1964), pp. 154-158.

I do not agree with this kind of the mixture of Judaism and orientalism. Unifying the two conceptions is a logical jump and their assertions are too syncretistic. In this aspect Eltester's affirmation is more reasonable. Eltester suggests parallels to Colossians 1:15-20 with the Philonic Logos, the Hermetic Aeon, and the cosmological speculation of Hellenism (ref. Guthrie, op. cit., pp. 353-354). He reckons the concept of the Logos in the prologue of John 1 as close parallel with Christ of the Colossians hymn. His explanation is different from Dibelius'. He finds the concept of the cosmic Anthropos in Judaism itself not in Iranian religion. His opinion is appeals more generally to Käsemann (gnostic background) rather than to Dibelius (Hellenistic background).¹¹

H. J. Gabathuler has traced the history of interpretation of Colossians 1:15-20 from Schleiermacher to Conzelmann in his writing, Jesus Christis, Haupt der Kirche-Haupt der Welt.¹² The history of the "Form-analysis" of Colossians 1:15-20 begins with the comprehensive study of Eduard Norden, in his writing, Agnostos Theos (1913).

Various attempts have been made to present the

¹¹Jack T. Sanders, op. cit., pp. 80-87.

¹²C. M. Bruce Vawter, "The Colossians Hymn and the Principle of Redaction," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 33, No. 1 (Jan. 1971), 67.

structure of Colossians 1:15-20. According to Norden, Lohmeyer, Käsemann, Lohse, Sanders, Grillmeir, the hymn consists of two strophes, each starting with a ζ (1:15-18a,18b-20). But in accordance with E. Schweizer, Martin, and Fuller, the hymn consists of three strophes (1:15-16, 17-18a,18b-20). E. Schweizer describes the three main points of Colossians 1:15-20 as Reconciliation, Resurrection, and Permeation,¹³ while Fuller argues that three strophes of the hymn to be discerned cover the aspects of Creation, Preservation, and Redemption.¹⁴

In contrast to this, Dr. McCown presents a new proposal in his brief study, "The Hymnic Structure of Colossians 1:15-20." He divides the hymnal passage into two stanzas (vss 15-16 and vss 18b-20), and describes verses 17-18a as a refrain.¹⁵ He suggests considerable poetic translation. Dr. McCown's hymnic structure which is tuned by the song, "Praise Him! Praise Him!" as follows:

¹³Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 68-73.

¹⁴Reginald H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 214-216.

¹⁵Wayne McCown, "The Hymnic Structure of Colossians 1:15-20," The Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 3 (July-Sept. 1979), 158-159.

Stanza I

He's the Image
of the invisible Godhead;
Prior to all
things that God did create.
Because in Him
all things were made in the heavens,
And on the earth
visible and unseen.
Whether thrones-,
rulers, lordships or powers,
All things through Him
and unto Him were made.

Refrain

He's before all,
and depends ev'rything on Him;
And He's the Head
of His Body, the Church.

Stanza II

He's the Premier,
from the dead the First to rise-;
That first place He
might have among all things.
Because in Him
was pleased to dwell all God's fullness,
And through Him to
reconcile all to God.
Making peace-,
through the blood of His cross,
Through Him, whether
things on earth or in heav'n.¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid., p. 161.

Chapter 4

JESUS CHRIST AS "IMAGE OF GOD"

In the Old Testament *εἰκών* is used for five different Hebrew words, but it occurs chiefly for *צַלְמֶךָ* (Gen. 1:26f., 5:1ff., 9:6 etc.). "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Only man can be called the image of God. Man was created in the image of God, so that he might dominate whole the world. But the image of God had been lost by the first Adam. In spite of the fall of the first Adam, the first man, man still bears the image of God, by his grace. In Genesis 5:3 the first man became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. Seth was not created by God himself. He was begotten through woman's pregnancy. Nevertheless he was called, indirectly, the image of God (Seth=the image of Adam=the image of God). And in Genesis 9:6 the prohibition of murder was grounded in the fact that "God made man in his own image" when God renewed his covenant with Noah who is a representative of new beginning in human history.

Εἰκών , derived from *ἕοικα* , which has a present force, meaning "to be similar," "to be like" means "image," "copy" in various senses, i.e. "representation," "reflection," and "manifestation." In Platonic cosmology

the cosmos was called the visible image of God. And in Hellenistic Judaism, Philo uses *εἰκόν* also of the heavenly Wisdom, of the Logos, and of the unseen God. Moule, Lohse, and Barclay show very well the historical data of the Greek use of *εἰκόν*. According to Barclay *εἰκόν* means an accurate description of the person, a perfect reflection in a mirror, an exact artistic reproduction and representation of the archetype in painting or statue on a coin, and a manifestation of that which is in itself invisible.¹⁷

Then is this concept Pauline or not? Despite the possibility of gnostic influence, as Eltester indicates, the concept *εἰκόν* is decidedly and originally Pauline. In this aspect Käsemann's scholarly assurance must be a logical leap. Sanders describes Käsemann's standpoint as follows:

The term *εἰκόν* of God in Col. 1:15 Käsemann also considers to mean materially the same as *μορφή* of God here, and the occurrence of this concept in several different places points back, in his opinion, to 'the same context of the doctrine of the primal Man-Redeemer, which was taken over from Gnosticism and made useful for New Testament christology.'¹⁸

I would like to agree with Gibbs' criticism in this subject.

¹⁷William Barclay, Jesus as They Saw Him (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), pp. 59-60 and 389-394.

¹⁸Jack T. Sanders, op. cit., p. 68.

His evaluation of several scholars illuminates the essential core of my argument on this ground. He says,

In light of the history of this term's interpretation, it appears probable that *εἰκών* is neither directly Jewish (Hugedé, Lohmeyer) nor directly Greek (Eltester), but Hellenistic-Jewish in origin of meaning as used in Col. 1:15. Lohse and Kehl, among others, have shown that the hymn does not refer to a supra-historical metaphysical drama of the gnostic Redeemer—i.e., the hymn is not sourced in myth..... The hymn is used in Colossians in such a way that "the image of the unseen God" is bound closely to history, so that both gnostic and Greek thought are not in control here.¹⁹

The word *εἰκών* in Colossians 1:15-20 does not merely refer to "the inner core and essence of a thing," but rather to the fact that Christ is a perfect and unique revelation of God. Judaism affirmed God's invisibility and prohibits making of any kinds of visible idolatry. "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Ex. 20:4). But Christianity is unique in considering the visibility of the invisible through his perfect likeness in Christ.²⁰

When Philip asked Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father," (Jn. 14:8) Jesus himself said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9). God is invisible because he is spirit.

¹⁹John G. Gibbs, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁰Donald Guthrie, op. cit., p. 355.

And when Moses asked God, "Show me thy glory," (Ex. 33:18) God himself answered, "You cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live" (33:20). Moses saw only God's back. Our only vision of God the Father is in his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus. For "no one has ever seen God but the only Son" (Jn. 1:18), and he who is the very image of the Father alone can reveal the unseen God. In God the Son we can know about God the Father, and in Jesus, Immanuel, God is with us. He is the perfect image of the invisible God. (In Phil. 2:6, a stronger word, *μορφῆς*, which expresses an essential prototype, was used instead of *εἰκόν*.)

According to Lightfoot the word *εἰκόν* involves two ideas: One is "representation" which means an archetype of a copy, and the other is "manifestation" which means the revelation of the unseen Father.²¹ The clause, "who is the image of the invisible God" would most clearly call to mind the Imago Dei of Genesis 1:26f. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" (Gen. 1:27). Adam was created "in his own image." But Christ was not created "in the image of God." He is "the image of the unseen God the Father." Christ is not a created being but the creator. Lohse says,

As the 'image' of the invisible God, he does not belong to what was created, but stands with the creator

²¹J. B. Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 145.

who, in²² Christ, is acting upon the world and with the world.

We can find the same use of "image" also in 2 Corinthians 4:4 and in Hebrews 1:3. It is interesting that the "image" is always related to the "glory." For image and glory are parallel terms in the Greek Old Testament, often translating the same Hebrew word.²³ Conzelmann also gives us the same description.

Εἰκὼν has a christological sense in 2 Cor. 4:4; cf. Col. 1:15 (homousia of God and the revealer)..... *δόξα* is understood in substantial terms, as the brilliance of light. In 1 Cor. 11, *δόξα* is in effect synonymous with *εἰκὼν*, but this sense is rare.²⁴

τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ
(2 Cor. 4:4). *ὅς ἐστιν* links *τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ* and *εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ* as an apposition. God "has given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). For Christ is the image of God.

"And we all, with unveiled face reflecting (as a mirror)

τῆν δόξαν κυρίου, are being changed into *τῆν αὐτῆν εἰκόνα* from one degree of *δόξης εἰς δόξαν*; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

²²Eduard Lohse, op. cit., p. 48.

²³Thomas L. Trevethan, Our Joyful Confidence (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), p. 36.

²⁴Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 175.

The glory of Christ is none other than the glory of God which becomes visible in the face of Christ; this is only a²⁵ paraphrase of what the predicate 'image of God' means.

(The omission of the article identifies the predicate).

And a similar phenomenon is found in Hebrews 1:3, that is,

ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως

("the reflection of his glory and the very stamp of his

nature," RSV). In 1 Corinthians 15:45-47, in the passage

about the two Adams and two men, Paul introduces the meaning

of the image (cf. 1 Cor. 11:7). Adam is *πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος*

and *πρῶτος Ἀδάμ*. On the other hand, Christ is not

δεύτερος Ἀδάμ but *δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος*. As the *ἔσχατος*

Ἀδάμ Christ finishes, on the Cross, all things which

belong to the *πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ*, that is, "the image

of the man of dust" (1 Cor. 15:49a). And as the *δεύτερος*

ἄνθρωπος Christ begins, with the resurrection, all

things which belong to the Son of God, that is, "the image

of the man of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49b, cf. Rom. 8:29).

Cullmann explains that the image of God is foundational to the meaning of Son of Man.²⁶

πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ was made "in the

²⁵John Bowden, trans., Christ in Christian Tradition, Vol. I, by Aloys Grillmeir (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), p. 24.

²⁶Shirley C. Guthrie & Charles A. M. Hall, trans., The Christology of the New Testament, by Oscar Cullmann (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 166-181.

image" or "according to the image" whereas Christ is said to be "the image" (Origen, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nyssa etc.).²⁷ The image of God and his glory had been lost by the earthly man, *πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ*, and but it has been restored in the heavenly man, *ἕσχατος Ἀδάμ - δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος*. As the followers of Christ we "have put off the old nature [a living being] with its practices and have put on the new nature [a life-giving spirit], which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:9-10).

We may well say that Jesus is the living image of God. In him the unknowable God becomes knowable; the unapproachable God becomes approachable; the invisible God becomes flesh and dwells among us, and we²⁸ see fully displayed his grace, his glory and his truth.

He is the "image" or visible manifestation of God not simply in that He is "like God" or brings news from God or even a message of God. Rather it is because He is the objectivization of God in human life, a coming into visible expression of the invisible God that the Church hails him, "Thou art the king of glory, O Christ."²⁹

²⁷T. E. Pollard, "Colossians 1:12-20: A Reconsideration," New Testament Studies, 27, No. 4 (July 1981), 574.

²⁸William Barclay, op. cit., p. 394.

²⁹Ralph P. Martin, Colossians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), p. 45.

Chapter 5

JESUS CHRIST AS "FIRST-BORN"

The argument of Arius (A.D. 256-336) about christology came from this clause. The Arians (Jehovah's Witness, too) maintained that Christ was created as well as Wisdom on the basis of the Wisdom literature. "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old" (Prov. 8:22). Against the Arians, Athanasius drew attention to the meaning of the title "first-born" in the light of Colossians 1:16 and added.

But if all the creatures were created in him, he is other than the creatures, and he is not a creature but the creator of the creatures.³⁰

The words *πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως* might seem at first glance to mean that Christ was created first and thereby he is regarded as a created being. Grammatically it is possible to make *πάσης κτίσεως* a partitive genitive. This, however, is not true. The objection to the Arians can be found in the context itself (vv. 16-17). In verse 16, "his beloved Son" and *τὰ πάντα* are clearly divided. "In him all things were created, all things have been created through him and for him" [ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ ἐκτίσται]. At the beginning is the aorist passive

³⁰Ibid., p. 45.

ἐκτίσθη (it shows that Christ is the creator), and at the end the perfect passive ἔκτισται. In his Grammatical Insights into the New Testament, N. Turner discusses the meaning of πρωτότοκος and the relationship between the two verbs from the viewpoint of tense, as follows:

The two tenses are thus explained by the fact that the πρωτότοκος conception necessarily involves two other conceptions, viz. (1) a past act which is peculiar (grammatically) because one aspect of creation is past for ever, and (2) a second action, the results are with us still, since we and all creation are not yet in actuality the icon of Christ, as he is of God.³¹

In verse 17 ἐν αὐτῷ is making clear that Christ is the agent (means) of creation who is before all creation. "In him all things hold together." The πρωτότοκος has nothing to do with Wisdom in Proverbs 8:22. The genitive is therefore commonly explained as a comparative genitive.³² Lohse gives us the implicit meaning of this clause:

"First-born"..... is not intended to mean that he was created first and thereby began the succession of created beings. Rather, it refers instead to his uniqueness..... The point is..... the superiority...³³ as the agent of creation who is before all creation.

Πρωτότοκος is a compound noun of πρῶτος (first) and the aorist root ΤΕΚ- (born). The active form πρωτότοκος means, "bearing one's first-born"; the passive form

³¹Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), p. 125.

³²W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. III (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 503.

³³Eduard Lohse, op. cit., p. 21.

πρωτότοκος , "first-born," appears about 130 times in the LXX (In 111 cases the Hebrew בְּרִיָּא was used).³⁴ The term *πρωτότοκος* involves a twofold meaning: One is priority to all creation (in other words, it declares the absolute pre-existence of the Son); the other is sovereignty over all creation.³⁵

The best adequate example of the latter's usage is Psalms 89:27, which is strongly messianic. David was the youngest son of Jesse's eight sons, but God promises, "I will make him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth." The word "will" expresses that this promise is not for David himself but Davidic king, Messiah. For God said this to David who was the king of Israel. David as the model of Christ becomes the king Messiah, first-born. And Israel was called as God's first-born son (Ex. 4:22). It is also true that *πρωτότοκος* indicates sovereignty in rank (primacy in honor) rather than mere temporal priority in time. It is used to describe the pre-eminent position of Christ in the whole world. Lightfoot says,

In its messianic reference this secondary idea of sovereignty predominated in the word *πρωτότοκος* , so that this point of view *πρωτότοκος* *πάσης κτίσεως* would mean 'sovereign Lord over all creation by virtue of primogeniture.'³⁶

The word *πρωτότοκος* appears eight times in the

³⁴TDNT, VI, 872.

³⁵J. B. Lightfoot, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

³⁶Ibid., p. 147.

New Testament. (It occurs in the plural in Heb. 11:28 and 12:23, and it always refers in the singular to Jesus Christ.)

In the New Testament Jesus was called as the first-born. He is the first-born of all creation (Col. 1:15), from the dead (Col. 1:18, cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-23), into the world (Heb. 1:6), among many brethren (Rom. 8:29), and of Mary (Lk. 2:7). The *πρωτότοκος* of Luke 2:7 and Romans 8:29 must be interpreted in the light of Colossians 1:18.

Luke 2:7 is an example which is used in the literary sense:

Καὶ ἔτεκεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον .

("And she gave birth to her first-born son.")

This is the only instance in the NT where, through the paronomastic use of *τίκτειν*, *πρωτότοκος* refers unequivocally to the process of birth, and this in the natural sense.³⁷

In order to understand this verse we should consider the account of human creation. According to Genesis 2, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the First Man Adam for the existence of Eve. Eve was created from the rib which God had taken from the sleeping Adam. This chain of events before the fall symbolizes the origin of the true Church. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the Last Adam Jesus for the existence of Church. When the Second Man Christ rose from the tomb, the Church began to be formed. Christ suffered on the Cross assuming the resurrection likewise

³⁷TDNT, VI, 876.

Adam slept on the premise that he would be risen again from sleeping.

"First-born" possibly conveys the implication that Jesus was the first of several children. But the thing which Christ is called the first-born of Mary does not mean that he possesses the elderly position among the fleshly brethren (ref. Mk. 6:3). Rather, it indicates that he is the first-born of Mary, the Second Eve, who is the model of true Church in typological meaning, that is, he becomes the first-born among many spiritual brethren through the resurrection in redemptive aspect. It must be a wonderful grace that he is not only the first-born of all creatures but the first-born from the dead. In this aspect Richardson's standpoint is right. He says,

When St. Luke calls Jesus Mary's first-born son (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρῶτότοκον , 2:7), he doubtless intends it to be understood that Jesus is the eldest of several sons (cf. Lk. 8:19f.). Probably he did not perceive that Christ's brethren, of whom he is *πρῶτότοκος* , i.e. all baptized christians, are in a true sense sons of Mary, the Second Eve. St. Paul had spoken of Christ as the *πρῶτότοκος* among many brethren, but the expression relates to the fatherhood of God (Rom. 8:29).³⁸

We can conceive God's eternal purpose in Romans 8:29-30. The purpose of God in the creation and redemption was making Christ be the first-born among many brethren who were glorified in him. Jesus was called God's only begotten

³⁸Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 176.

Son (Jn. 1:14,3:16). He was with God in the beginning (Jn. 1:1). But God sent his only begotten Son Jesus to make him his first-born Son through the resurrection.

How could this crucified Jesus be thought of in terms of the Messiah, the Word, Wisdom, the first-born? The answer lies in the Resurrection. Jesus was the first-born from the dead (Col. 1:18, Rev. 1:5). The fact of the resurrection explains the complete pre-eminence in time, before time, and in eternity given to Jesus Christ..... The first place in the universe goes by right to him who vanquished death.³⁹

Through the resurrection Christ became the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29) and many sons (Heb. 2:10). John 20 illuminates to this fact. "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Jesus always called God, "Father," "my Father" before the resurrection because he was just God's only begotten Son. But after the resurrection Jesus added distinctively "your Father" because he became God's first-born Son among many brethren. He is the first-born of all creation and from the dead (cf. Rev. 1:5). He is first in the order of the resurrection of the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-23). He is not only a hero in creation but also in salvation history. The word *πρωτότοκος* really shows the unique genealogy of the incarnate Logos. He was "born with the eternity" (*γεννηθεῖς οὐρανίου*, Oecumenius) "God and also the Son of God," (*θεὸς γὰρ καὶ θεοῦ υἱός*, Chrysostom) and

³⁹William Barclay, op. cit., p. 403.

"the immutable One from the immutable One" (ἀτρέπτος
ἐξ ἀτρέπτου , Athanasius).⁴⁰

⁴⁰Sang Kun Lee, The Lee's Commentary on the Prison Epistles (Seoul: Jesus Korea Presbyterian Council, 1982), p. 269.

Chapter 6

JESUS CHRIST AS "HEAD"

Paul uses pleasingly and frequently the analogy of the body to show the relationship between God and man (Rom. 12:4,5, 1 Cor. 12:12-27, cf. 10:17). The relation of the head to the body is superior to the relationship between the creator and creatures, the ruler and the ruled in the viewpoint of experimental dimension. The former is a more intimate and practical theme than the latter are, to reveal his relative characteristics to the believers.

In the Old Testament, heads are associated with the princes (Num. 1:16,10:4), with the elders (Josh. 23:2), and with the judges (Josh. 24:1). According to Barclay the head ($\psi \times \gamma$ in Hebrew) is the symbol of leadership, of royalty, and of divine authority.⁴¹

In the New Testament where *κεφαλή* appears 75 times, the word occurs primarily in its basic meaning of the head of a man (Mt. 14:8), of an animal, or of demons (Rev. 17:3). And we can find the idea, Zeus is named as *Zeus κεφαλή* in the Orphic fragment, and its mythological use by Hellenistic Judaism and Gnosticism (Lohse treats briefly the *κεφαλή - δῶμα* myth in his study). There are some clear passages which indicate Christ's headship among

⁴¹William Barclay, op. cit., pp. 384-385.

the Pauline Epistles. They can be classified as follows:

(1) Christ is the head of man.

Paul is explaining the supremacy of man as the head of woman, Christ as the head of every man, and God as the head of Christ in 1 Corinthians 11:3a, where Paul treats the real position of woman in Christian community.

(2) Christ is the head of all principalities and Powers.

He is "the head of all rule and authority" (Col. 2:10, cf. Eph. 1:20-22a). There are only two kinds of principalities and powers in this world. One belongs to the celestial territory and their head is Christ in contradiction to that the other belongs to the terrestrial territory and their head is Satan. We have principalities and powers at war against Satanic principalities and powers, and they are controlled by Christ, the head of all rule and authority (Eph. 6:11-12).

(3) Christ is the head of the Church.

As Vincent Taylor has indicated, the name "the Head" asserts his inseparability from the Church, but it also excludes his identity with it.⁴² This concept appears only in Colossians and Ephesians (Col. 1:18-19, Eph. 1:22b-23, cf. 4:15, 5:23). It is interesting that in

⁴²Jr. S. Lewis Johnson, "Christ Pre-eminent," Bibliotheca Sacra, 119, No. 473 (Jan. 1962), 17.

both, the *κεφαλή* theme is used in connection with the *πλήρωμα* theme. Here in Colossians Paul lays emphasis on Christ as the "Head of the Church" and in Ephesians on the Church as the "Body of Christ."⁴³

Colossians and Ephesians describe Christ as the "head of all rule and authority" (Col. 2:10, *ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλή πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας*). "God has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ χριστῷ*, 'to bring together under one head.')⁴⁴ things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10, cf. Rom. 8:28-30). Shieler's comment on this is considerable.

To be sure, *ἀνακεφαλαιώσθαι* is to be derived from *κέφαλον* rather than *κεφαλή*. But it is most likely that what is meant by the designation of Christ as *κεφαλή* led the author of Ephesians to choose this relatively infrequent but rich and varied term which agrees so well with his intention.⁴⁵

The cosmic view of Christ as the head of the universe is very apparent in these two Epistles. But simultaneously, they show Christ as "head of the Church" (Col. 1:18, Eph.

⁴³Archibald T. Robertson, Paul and the Intellectuals, the Epistle to Colossians (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1928), p. 72.

⁴⁴Oscar Cullmann, op. cit., p. 229.

⁴⁵TDNT, III, 682.

1:22). Christ's lordship includes his glorious body, the Church, as well as all created beings. He is "head" not only of the Church but also of the universe. He is Lord of the whole universe, and also he is Lord of the Church. In Paul's cosmic view of Christ he is now the head of the Church, which is his body, and is thereby the head of all creation.⁴⁶

Christ the head is the center of the very life of the Church the body. Only the head can control and direct whole body. In this regard, Moule's assertion is too extreme. He says,

In any case, it must not be assumed that, to St. Paul, *κεφαλή* suggested control or direction, as by the mind. It is true that this function of the brain had already been suggested by Hippocrates and at least tentatively accepted by Plato; but it appears to have been obscured by Aristotle and then by the Stoics; and it is safer to assume that, ~~to~~ St. Paul, it meant supremacy and, perhaps, origin.

Christ as the *κεφαλή* of the Church not only has supremacy and authority in state, but he can control and direct the Church in vitality. These concepts, control and direction, have great practical importance for the life of the local Church. Christ controls his Church in terms of his

⁴⁶Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Pauline Theology (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 77.

⁴⁷C. F. D. Moule, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: The Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 68.

supremacy and he directs his body by his authority over the Church through the ministry of his Word.

Jesus is the head of the Church (Col. 1:18, Eph. 1:22,5:23), of all rule and authority (Col. 2:10), and the *κεφαλῆ* of the corner (Acts 4:11, 1 Pet. 2:7). Martin comments on this as follows:

He is 'head of the body,' the universe..... Headship then signifies Christ's rulership over the celestial powers and denotes his supremacy..... He rules over the Church, which by his overlordship is freed from astral tyranny.⁴⁸

Lohse understands this, not as a mythological statement, but as an historical entity. He says,

The author of Col. however, proceeds to interpret this mythological statement in such a way that the concept "body" is defined by the "Church" and is thereby understood as a historical entity. Here and now the exalted Lord exercises his rule over all, the world as the head of his body which is the Church.⁴⁹

But it does not seem that the concept of Christ as the head of the body, the Church, is Paul's original thought. For in his earlier writings only the concept of Church as the body of believers appears (Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12:12-27). And in fact we can not find any statement of Christ's headship over the Church in these Epistles. Moreover some consider the words "the Church" are an interpretive addition by Paul himself.⁵⁰ Gibbs articulates this point of view

⁴⁸Ralph P. Martin, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴⁹Eduard Lohse, op. cit., p. 55.

⁵⁰Donald Guthrie, op. cit., p. 357.

in spite of having an opposite opinion about this.

The majority of contemporary opinion is in favor of treating τῆς ἐκκλησίας as an addition to the original hymn, so that the Christian redactor would have transformed a cosmic into an ecclesiological and soteriological statement. Käsemann describes the addition as an effort to historicize a timeless and mythic gnostic hymn, but Schweizer sees it as an Hellenistic-Christian misunderstanding in cosmic terms of Pauline ecclesiology.⁵¹

To the contrary, Gibbs himself agrees with Kehl's argument, that is, the words " τῆς ἐκκλησίας " belongs to the original hymn in a transitional "middle strophe," and that it is essential to the meaning of verse 18a.⁵²

Conclusively speaking, this idea of Christ as the head of the body, τῆς ἐκκλησίας must be Paul's later development in his thought from mythic and cosmic to ecclesiological and soteriological implication.

The hymn, no less than its context in Colossians, declares that Christ's lordship over the Church has cosmic implications and Church-existence is inseparable from the rest of the universe.⁵³

There is no question about Christ's concrete lordship to the Church and the universe in terms of the expression,

' κεφαλῆ.'

⁵¹John G. Gibbs, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

⁵²Ibid., p. 105.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 105-106.

Chapter 7

JESUS CHRIST AS "PREMIERE"

The word ἀρχή (ἄρχι in Hebrew) which is used 55 times in New Testament (18 times in the Johannine writings) always signifies "primacy," whether in time: "beginning," principium, or in rank: "power," "dominion," "office." The term is in Colossians 1:18 applied to the Incarnate Christ in relation to the Church.⁵⁴ He is the ἀρχή and the τέλος (Rev. 21:6b, 22:13b, cf. 1:8, 21:6a, 22:13a), the ἀρχή of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14), the ἀρχηγός (it is found only four times in the NT and is applied only to Jesus) of life (Acts 3:15), the ἀρχηγός and Savior at God's right hand (Acts 5:31), the ἀρχηγός of the believer's salvation (Heb. 2:10), and the ἀρχηγός of faith (Heb. 12:2).⁵⁵

Here Christ is simply ἀρχή, not the ἀρχή of the creation in the cosmological sense. Rather, it is the ἀρχή of re-creation in the soteriological sense. The term ἀρχή must be interpreted throughout in connection with verses 15-20. He is not the ἀρχή of the creation as the πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως (v. 15) but the

⁵⁴J. B. Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 157.

⁵⁵Richard N. Longenecker, The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1970), pp. 54-55.

ἀρχή of re-creation as the πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν (v. 18). In this connection Moule's assertion is very acceptable.

Is this creative initiative related to the creation of the universe or to the 'new creation,' the creation of the redeemed community, the Christian Church? On balance, the context seems to support the latter..... It is better to reckon with the two theme - and so to find a striking instance⁵⁶ of how 'cosmology' and 'soteriology' are interlaced.

The christological hymn, Colossians 1:15-20 consists of the distinct two themes. They can be compared as follows:

(Cosmological theme)	(Soteriological theme)
1. <u>ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ</u>	1. <u>ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή</u>
2. <u>πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως</u>	2. <u>πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν</u>
3. <u>ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς</u>	3. <u>ὅτι..... δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα..... εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς</u>

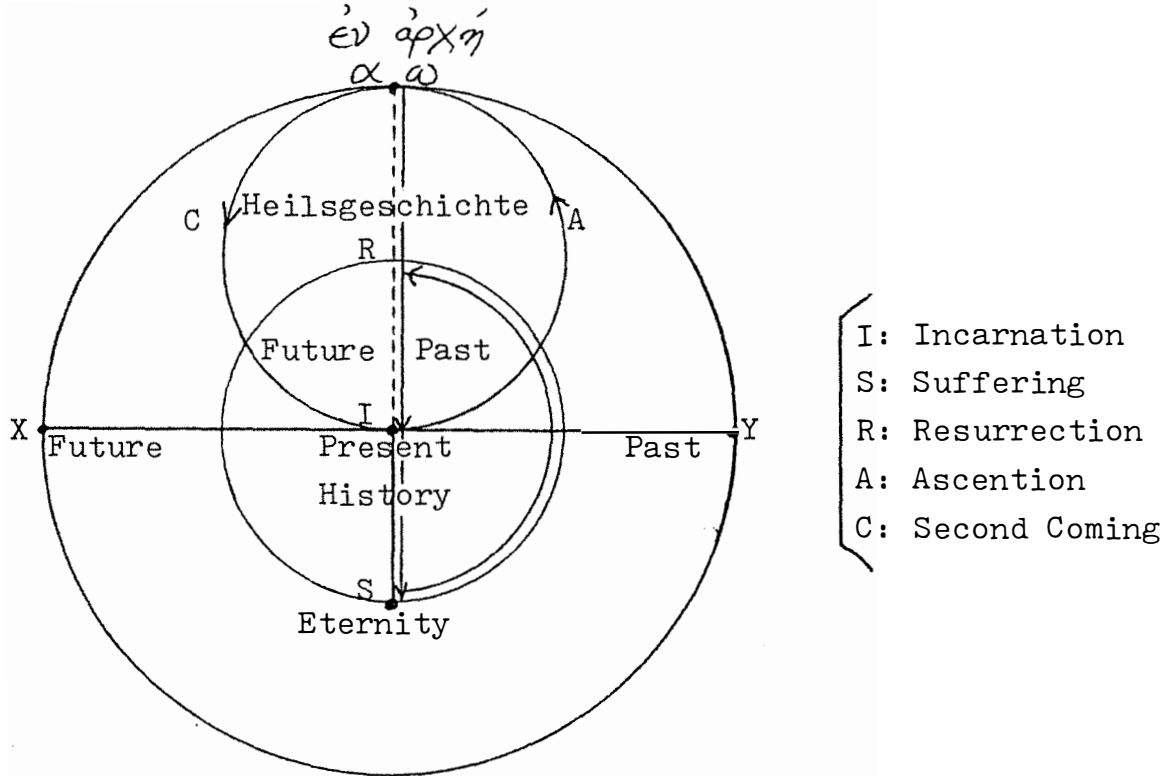
Both themes are divided by the term πρωτότοκος and a ὅτι clause. Christ is the Last Adam and the Second Man, but neither the Second Adam nor the Last Man (1 Cor. 15:45ff.). He is the ἀρχή of re-creation, the new redeemed humanity as Adam is the ἀρχή of the creation. In principle he can be the basis for the resurrection of the saints (1 Cor. 15:20) because in time he is the ἀρχή from the dead, that is, the ἀρχή of the resurrection.

Christ is the Second Man, whose coming marks a new beginning as a new segment of humanity is brought into existence.⁵⁷

⁵⁶C. F. D. Moule, op. cit., p. 69.

⁵⁷Ralph P. Martin, op. cit., p. 48.

And through this verse (Col. 1:18) we can find the history of redemption.



The "ἐν ἀρχῇ" is a selected point among the infinite points on the surface of circumference of the eternity. And the future, the first form of time, comes from the eternity in the direction "↪", and goes to the direction "↩" passing by the present. It is repeated circularly. "In the beginning" is the very moment when the birth of the future and history is accomplished simultaneously. Therefore the origin of time and history is equal in eternity. The diameter which links "X" to "Y" is also the dimension of time. It is not repeated and circular but

unique and straight. But the future comes from the point "X," the circumference of eternity because "X" and "Y" are also a certain point which is on the surface of circumference of the eternity. The circular time " α - ω (ἀρχή - τέλος)" is the flow of time in history whereas the straight time "X-Y" is the stream of time in time.

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever, Amen" (Rom. 11:36). "From him" (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) is " α -time" (ἀρχή), the big event comes from the eternity. "To him" (εἰς αὐτόν) is " ω -time" (τέλος). The glorious regression to the ἀρχή. "Through him" (δι' αὐτοῦ) is "I-time" in the present. The inner circle with the present in the center is this world, and human history is formed in the level of "X-Y time." And the upper circle with the point "R" is the Church, and God's salvation history is formed in the level of " α - ω time," the flow of circular time. The big outer circle which is including the inner circle and upper circle is the heavenly Kingdom, and it exists eternally in the stream of eternity.

"When the time was full," God became incarnate in the present (the point "I"), the center of diameter "X-Y" which are both axes of straight time. So the center of the cosmos changed from the present to Jesus' incarnation. Jesus toured through the extreme point "S" of the cosmos in terms of his suffering. And he became the ἀρχή and Savior by continuing tour to the opposite culminating point

"R." In other words, human history was tolerated in the presence of God's saving history. Now everyone who believes in him can reach the point "R" from the starting point "I." And they are able to turn round this world by the semidiameter "I-R" of the inner circle and the heavenly Kingdom by the radius "I- α " (or "I- ω ") of the outer circle. The point "R," the center of God's Heilsgeschichte, is making an ecclesiological radius which is attached to the point "I," the ultimate point of Heilsgeschichte. And the ἀρχή, the resurrected Christ from the dead, ascended toward the point " ω " in the direction " \curvearrowright " passing beyond history. But there are still remaining, sons of eternity as the Remnant in the present, at the point "I." Accordingly Christ becomes the existence of Second Coming toward the point "I" in the future history as an already incarnated, suffered, resurrected, and ascended Savior.

Christ alone can be the Lord in salvation history for he alone is the ἀρχή of re-creation. The term ἀρχή should be defined by the following words, ΠΡΩΤΟΤΟΚΟΣ ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΝΕΚΡΩΝ . The word ΠΡΩΤΟΤΟΚΟΣ implies not only that he is the first fruit (ἀπαρχή) from the dead but also that others follow. All believers' resurrection is based on his archetypal ability to rise from death.

When the singular form is applied to Christ in Col. 1:18 the emphasis is on priority in order or normative authority, an ἀρχή It is by the resurrection that Christ receives this normative authority, as the

immediately following phrase (*πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν
νεφῶν*) and the following *ἵνα* and *ὅτι* clauses
make clear.⁵⁸

⁵⁸John G. Gibbs, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

New Testament christology has been greatly influenced by the critical studies on "the quest of the historical Jesus." (Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus; Ernst Käsemann, The Problem of the Historical Jesus; James M. Robinson, The New Quest of the Historical Jesus; Harvey K. McArthur, The Quest Through the Centuries etc.)⁵⁹ In spite of the distinctiveness in the character and method of study, the main concern of those scholars' arguments has something in common with the historicity of Jesus together with Jesus' humanity. The historic Jesus was a very man of his time and at the same time he was a divine man.

The confession of Jesus as Lord (God and Man) by the early Church may be the cornerstone in the formation of christology. It is true that Church history has consisted of different theological standpoints about Jesus' person. But extreme, one-sided affirmations of Jesus' person have always been condemned as heresy by the Bible itself. Jesus' humanity and divinity are grounded on the historic Jesus,

⁵⁹Following scholars are also contributing to the study in this field. Carl E. Braaten, Ethelbert Stauffer, Hans Conzelmann, Heinrich Otto, Otto A. Piper, and Rudolf Bultmann. The most of their studies were edited by Carl E. Braaten in his book, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964).

the unique center of God's saving activity, who was incarnated, crucified, and resurrected. A biblical christology must be based on the apostolic confession to Jesus as the God-Man. Paul confesses Jesus as Lord because he has received Jesus Christ as his Lord (Col. 2:6). The idioms, "our Lord Jesus Christ," which are frequently used by Paul himself (28 times) show that Jesus' messiahship begins with the early Church is based on Jesus' messiahship. Jesus is "the Christ." (Mk. 8:29)

In this respect the above-mentioned brief study on Colossians 1:15-20 makes us confess Jesus Christ not only as "Image," "First-born," "Head," and "Premiere" but as "Christ."

Christology has its practical reason for being in both theological understanding and affirmative faith. Historically observing, it is not by mere chance that many heretic sects have their origin in the mistaken christology. St. John also diagnoses the spirit of antichrist according to the fact whether one confesses that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God" or not (1 Jn. 4:2-3). If we apply the theological scalpel to heretic sects which were formed under Christian background, we are able to perceive that all kinds of their errors are eventually caused by the blunder, "mistaken christology."

On the one hand, the surprising growth of the Church in the third world (especially in Korea) should be accepted

as a miraculous event in contemporary Church history. On the other hand, as a Korean, I agree with the fact that there is an uneasy negative aspect in this positive phenomenon. It is the absence of theology. Sudden Church growth without secure theological background has become a stumbling block to the development of biblical Christianity, and one of diverse causes to a new rise in heretic sects in Korean churches. Nowadays there are about 100 heretic sects in Korean Christianity.⁶⁰ The most powerful and demonic heresiarch is Mr. Sun Moon of the Unification Church. The heresy of Sun Moon's Moonatic Unification principle and thought are a direct and representative production which is caused by the absence of theology, that is, a misunderstanding of christology.

Above all, it is necessary to proclaim christological message not only to excavate the demonic elements from heretic sects which make a noise in the world but to prevent the penetrating antichrist's power. In order to achieve this goal we, first of all, should have an accurate recognition to Jesus through the serious Bible study, and subsequent bold confession, "Jesus is the Christ." Secondly, theological and biblical basis to New Testament christology through scholars' studies must be adapted by all Christians practically in their daily lives. A preacher can be an

⁶⁰Myung Hwan Tak, New Religions, Christian Sects, Vol. III (Seoul: Institute of International Religious Topics, 1980), p. 47.

adaptor which connects two different types of Christian community, i.e. scholars in their study and believers in this world. Consequently I will preach regularly christological sermons referring to this brief study on Colossians 1:15-20.

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