

Paul's Letter to the

COLOSSIANS



You Are Here

You Were Taught Christ Jesus The Lord

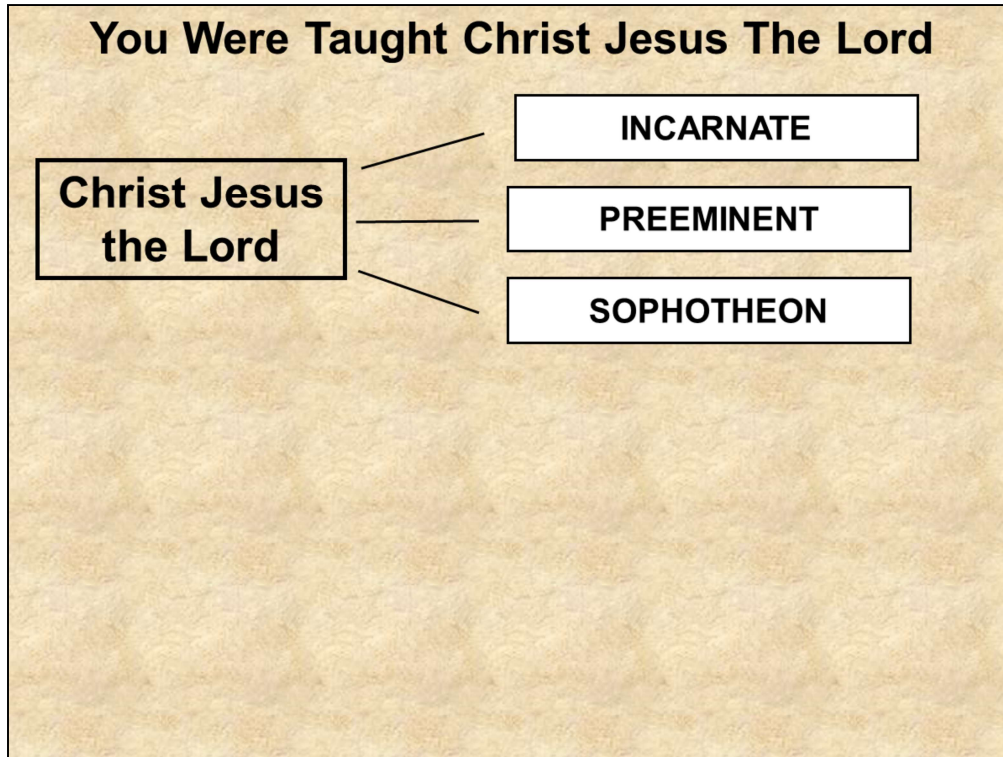
**Christ Jesus
the Lord**

You were taught Christ Jesus the Lord

Last week we explored some of the themes Paul addresses in his letter regarding Christ Jesus the Lord.

In his effort to strengthen the church in Colossae, to enable them to withstand the pressure from the culture around them, he emphasized three things about Jesus.

What were they?



You were taught Christ Jesus the Lord

Christ Jesus the Lord is...

Incarnate – God in the flesh

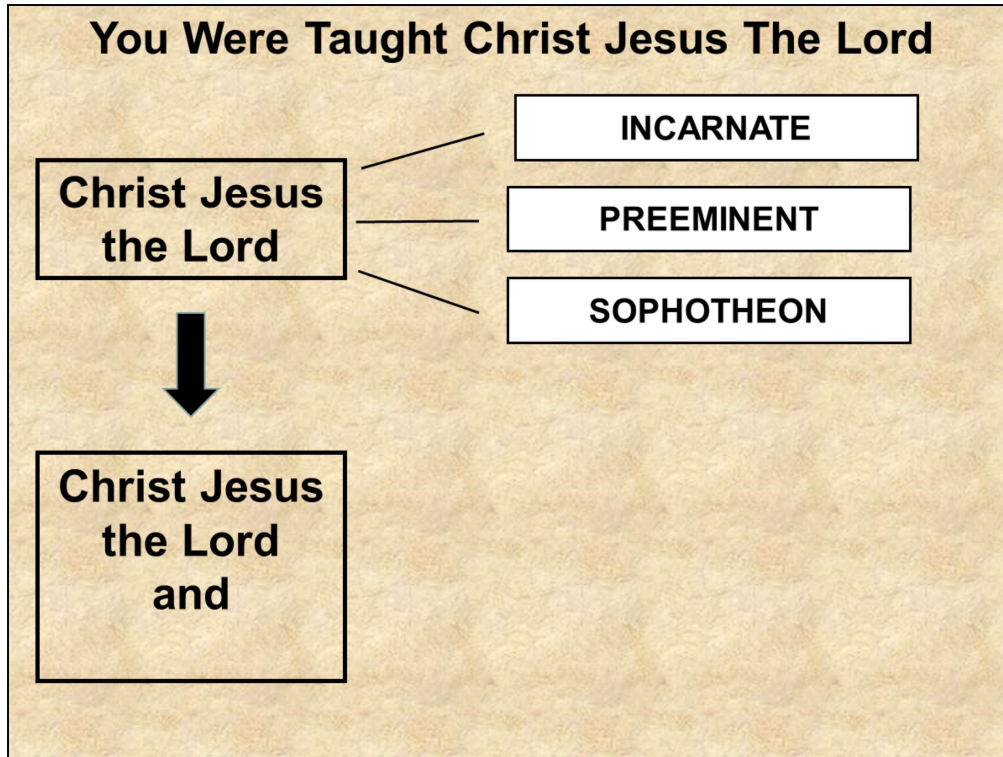
Preeminent – Supreme over all (creation and the church)

Sophotheon – the Wisdom of God

We saw that while Jesus is supreme over creation, many of we human creatures are in rebellion against the creator. The church is given as an outpost of Christ's rule in the midst of the broken creation.

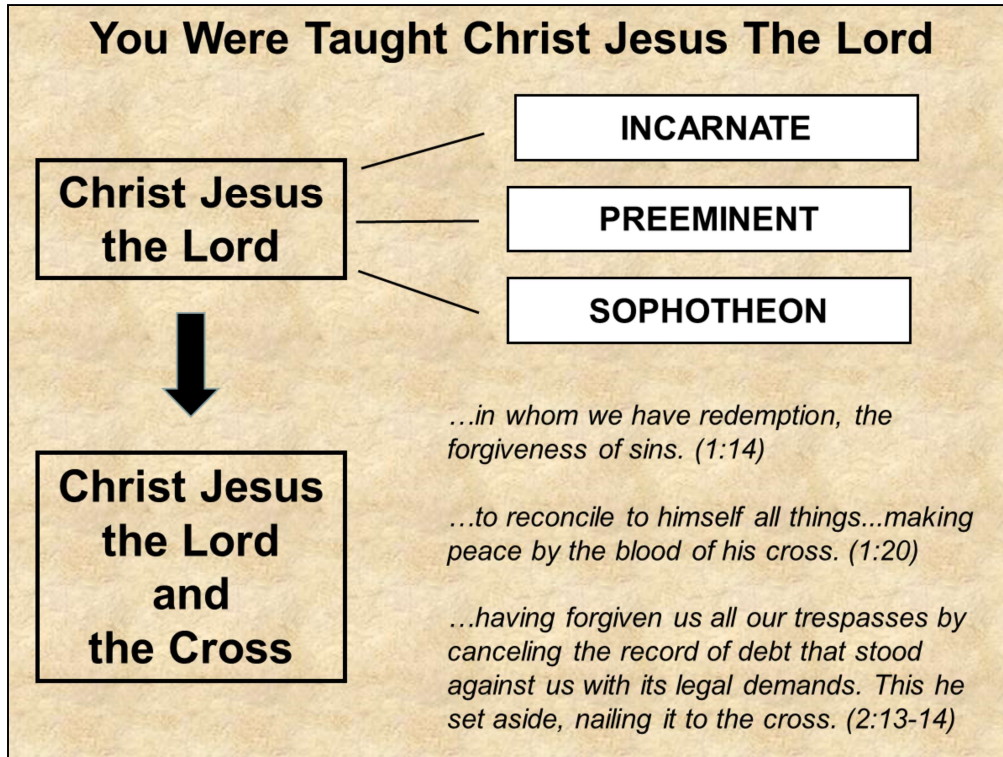
How is the church to survive under such conditions?

By living true to the Wisdom of God found in Christ Jesus the Lord.



You were taught Christ Jesus the Lord

Before we move on to receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, we need to take note of three passages that shed light on why receiving him is such a transformative experience.



You were taught Christ Jesus the Lord

...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (1:14)

...to reconcile to himself all things...making peace by the blood of his cross. (1:20)

...having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (2:13-14)

Something happened on the cross that is vital for us as Christians to understand. Now you might think this goes without saying, but we are prone to drifting from what we've been taught, just as the Colossian church is doing. Paul's instruction is as much for us as it is for them.

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Let's break these verses down into a few categories.

First, what are the terms/images that shows the condition of our need, or our lack?

What are the images that show sufficiency or a condition of wholeness?

What is the means or mechanism or action that accomplishes this?

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<i>sins & trespasses / enmity / debt</i>	————	State of Being
<i>blood of cross / nailing to cross</i>	————	Action
<i>forgiveness / peace / freedom</i>	————	State of Being

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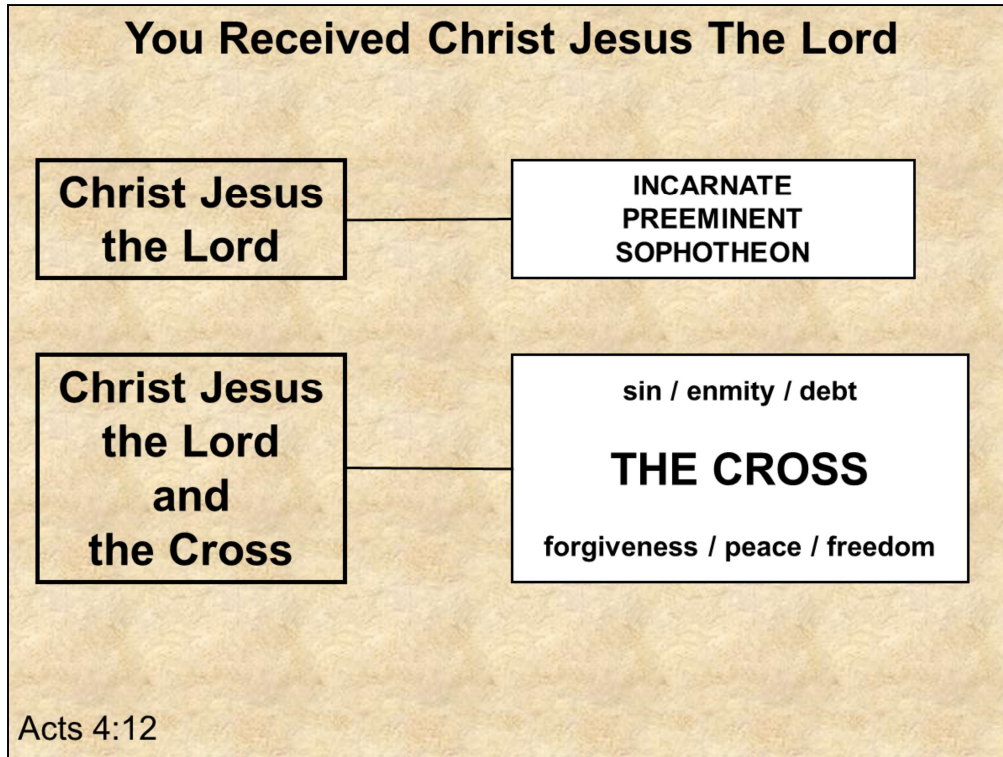
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sins & trespasses / enmity / debt

blood of his cross / nailing it to the cross

forgiveness / peace / freedom (through redemption)

The means by which one's state of being is transformed is thru the action Jesus took on the cross. He did what was necessary. However, though the work has been done by Christ Jesus the Lord, there is one condition to being the beneficiaries of what he has done - **Receiving Christ Jesus the Lord.**

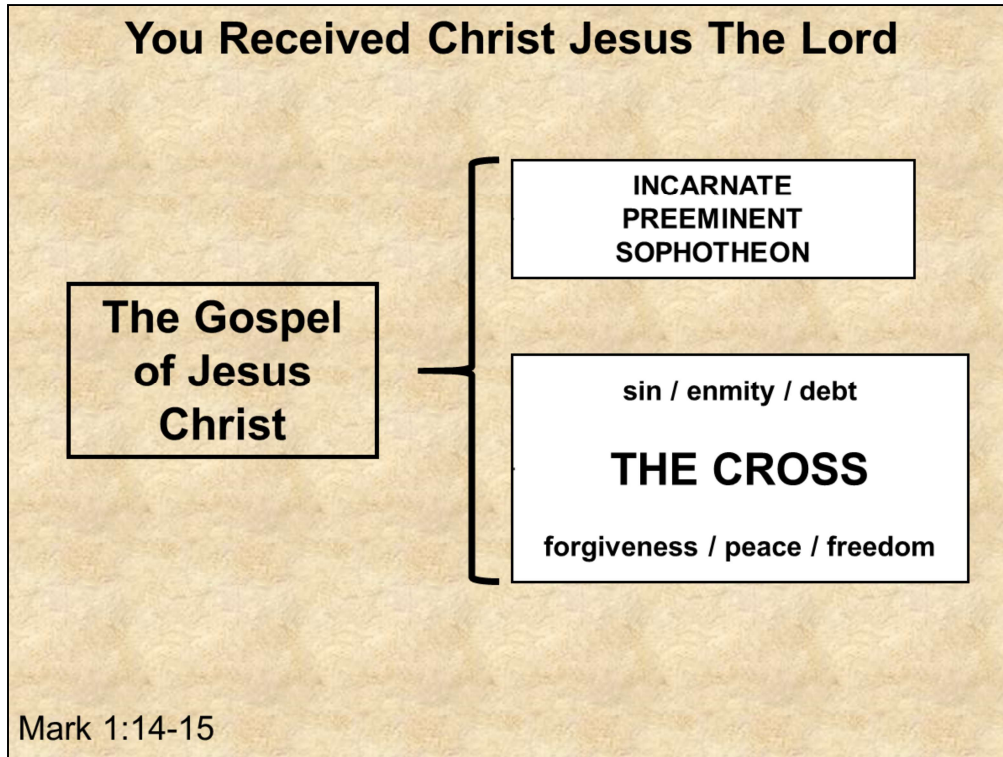


You Received Christ Jesus the Lord

Though we may be able to distinguish between who Jesus is and what he has done, we cannot divide the two. Jesus is the one mediator between God and man. No other person could have done what he did because no other person is like him. As Peter said:

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

And when we take both together, what is the biblical short hand that is commonly used?



You received Christ Jesus the Lord

We talk about sharing the Gospel, proclaiming the Gospel, being a Gospel-centered church, and sharing in Gospel-spreading missions.

The Gospel is a message, a truth-claim, and a command that requires a response from those who hear it.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:14-15

The incarnate, preeminent Lord suffered death on the cross that we might pass from a condition of sin, enmity, and debt to a condition of forgiveness, peace (with God), and freedom (through redemption from the ultimate penalty of our sin). And this gospel is what the Colossian church heard and believed, that is, they received Christ Jesus the Lord.

You Received Christ Jesus The Lord

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. (1:3-7)

You received Christ Jesus the Lord

Paul describes the Gospel message as an active thing – it came to them, it is bearing fruit in the world and in them, it is (or has) a power.

What are the words and phrases that indicate the response of the Colossian believers to the Gospel?

They heard the Gospel

They placed their faith in Christ Jesus

They understood the grace of God in truth

All these are ways of saying – they received Christ Jesus the Lord.

The work of salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ, receiving him and his work is the appropriate response for those who hear the Gospel. And doing so brings the movement we saw earlier, but with an additional element added.

You Received Christ Jesus The Lord

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<i>blood of cross / nailing to cross</i> ———	Action
Receiving Christ Jesus the Lord ———	Response
<i>forgiveness / peace / freedom</i> ———	State of Being

Romans 5:1-2; Acts 2:37-39; Ephesians 1:13-14

You received Christ Jesus the Lord

Believing the Gospel, having faith in Jesus, receiving Christ Jesus the Lord – this brings us to be receivers of what Christ Jesus the Lord has done.

Romans 5:1-2; Acts 2:37-39; Ephesians 1:13-14

And Paul illustrates this with three striking images...

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1 Peter 2:9-10

You received Christ Jesus the Lord

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I love this image of being brought from a place of desolation to a place of abundance.

1 Peter 2:9-10

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And you, who were once **alienated** and hostile in mind...he has now **reconciled** in his body of flesh (1:21-22)

1 Peter 3:18

You received Christ Jesus the Lord

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*And you, who were once **alienated** and hostile in mind...he has now **reconciled** in his body of flesh (1:21-22)*

Jesus is the ultimate Peacemaker, paving the way back to God at the cost of his own life, so that rebels can once again become the children of God.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit... (1 Peter 3:18)

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And you, who were **dead** in your trespasses...God made **alive** together with him (2:13)

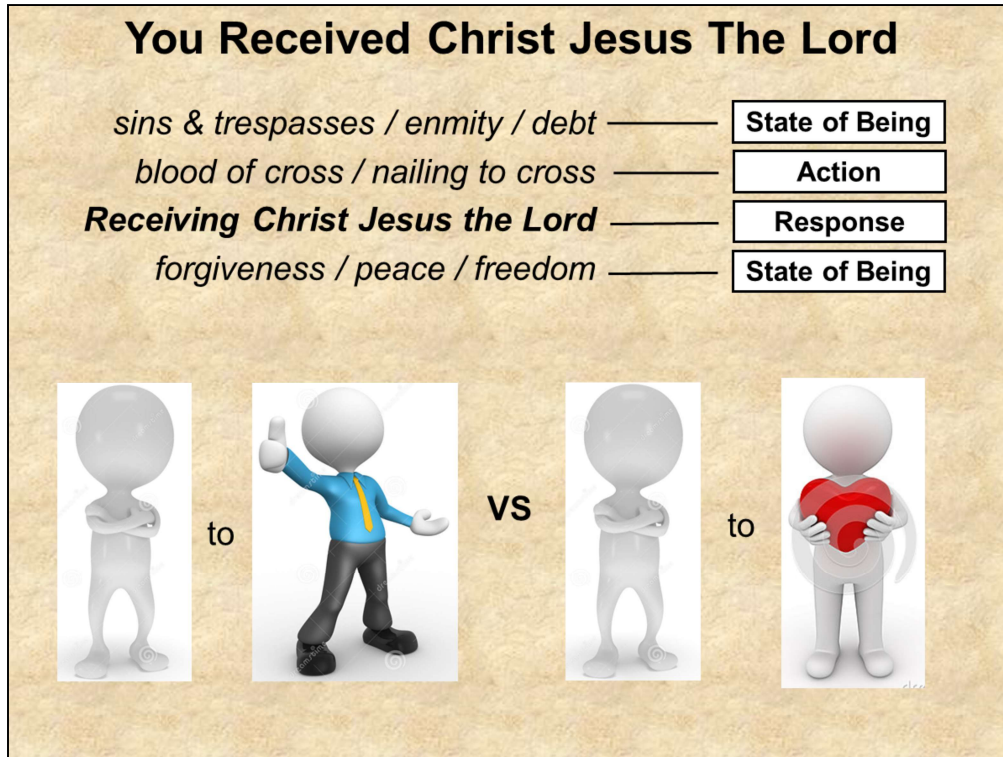
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The image of resurrection, being dead but raised to life by God, is an important one in the NT. And it forms the basis of Paul's instruction for how we are to live out the transformation we experience as believers. But the dead/alive image is not the only one. What are some others? (lost/found, darkness/light, sick/well). Each one captures a part of the transformation that occurs for believers.



You received Christ Jesus the Lord

The transformation that occurs by grace through faith is much more radical than many people think. Some view Christianity as merely a moral system to be adopted in order to “get right with God”. But the images Paul presents are much deeper. We are given a new heart, we are a new creation, God puts his Spirit within us.

A person, when presented with the message of the Gospel, acknowledges their own deficiency to move from darkness to light, from alienation to reconciliation, from death to life, and puts their trust and hope in Christ Jesus the Lord. His work brings the change, creates the new heart, brings us to God, makes us alive in the kingdom of God.

Next week we will look at the spiritual challenge in the Colossian church that was undermining the believers' understanding of the Gospel.

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