

Reign of Christ

Colossians 1:11–20

Many scholars place the writing of Colossians at a time after Paul's death. The letter, however, bears Paul's name, likely an honour to a beloved teacher. This letter warns the Christians in Colossae against false teachers and, in the focus passage, speaks to the work of Jesus the Christ.

The writer describes Christ as the "firstborn of all creation" (v. 15). The Nicene Creed seeks to describe this dimension of Jesus' identity in the phrase "begotten, not made." Jesus is the image (in Greek, *ikon*) of the invisible God.

Verses 15–20 appear to be a fragment of an early hymn. Christ is praised here as the image of God and as one who has redeemed and reconciled the world. The writer calls on the Christians in Colossae to join in giving thanks for the gifts received through Christ.

The hymn also praises Christ as the agent of Creation. All things have been created through Christ, and all things hold together in Christ. As were the disciples in Colossae, we also are empowered to live new lives in Christ.

Gracious God, our shepherd, our guide, our sovereign, you reach out to gather us to you in so many different ways, showing us over and over how your realm of grace and love differs from

the powers and principalities of our age, which we witness in our daily lives. Open our eyes that we may see you more clearly. Amen.

A Letter to Colossae

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