

Study 3

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

PREMINENTLY AND SUPREMEPLY DIFFERENT

THE false teachers who had been trying to sway the Colossians away from Gospel were known as *Gnostics* (the 'G' is silent in English). They claimed that Jesus was not much more than a 'holy man' and that with right kind of secret knowledge (the Greek word for *knowledge* is "gnosis") and physical deprivations (depriving oneself of physical pleasures such as eating) any person could attain to the same level of enlightenment as Jesus.

1. In what way does Paul state that Jesus was no mere 'holy man' in what he wrote in Colossians 1:15?

2. Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Colossians 1:15 teaches that Christ was the first of Jehovah's creations. But how does Colossians 1:18 qualify what the term "firstborn" is referring to and how does this refute what Jehovah's Witnesses teach about Christ?

3. According to Colossians 1:16, what is Christ's relationship to the physical world? (Note also Hebrews 3:3 for a similar point.)

4. How does Colossians 1:17 demonstrate that Jesus was not a created being?

Far from Christ being removed from the physical realm, which the Gnostics considered to be tainted with evil, which is why they considered Jesus never had any contact with the physical world, Paul states very clearly that it was Christ who actually *created* the physical realm—and in fact, it was Christ who *held together* the material world!

5. While the Gnostics were trying to draw people away from the Church, what case does the Apostle Paul make in Colossians 1:18 that gives a reason why every believer should be connected to the Church?

6. What do we learn from Colossians 1:19 about what the early Church believed about Christ?

The Gnostics were teaching that salvation was a matter of devout human effort.

7. How does Colossians 1:20 reveal that the Gnostics were wrong about salvation?

Amen.