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...in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:14

This verse corresponds closely to Ephesians 1:7. "In whom" is speaking of Christ who is "the Son of His love" of the previous verse. It is through God's Beloved Son that "we have redemption through His blood." In the Greek, there is an article before "redemption." It states "the redemption" and thus it sets the thought apart as the great act of redemption to which any other act (such as the redemption of Israel from Egypt) was a lesser redemption, or merely a type and shadow.

In other words, the promised Redeemer of Genesis 3:15 is realized in Christ Jesus. From that proclamation, every idea of redemption which is found in Scripture pointed to what Christ would do for us. This true redemption was realized "through His blood." We now stand justified and free from sin's penalty through the redemption that came by His work, and which culminated in the shedding of His blood (meaning His death) on the cross.

The term "redemption" comes from a root word which indicates the price paid to redeem a person, such as a prisoner of war. It signifies liberty from captivity, bondage, or imprisonment. We are born into sin and we are prisoners of sin, held in bondage by its power and are kept by the master of sin, the devil. This is confirmed by the devil's words to Jesus in Luke 4 where he stated that "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." Sin is a firm bond and the devil is a cruel taskmaster. However, Jesus' mission was to destroy this power. John notes this as the principle reason for His coming -

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8

Jesus prevailed where Adam failed. What the devil gained through Adam's disobedience, Jesus regained through His obedience. What God asks is that we simply believe this

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message, receive His gift, and place our trust in what Jesus has done for us. This is the “redemption through His blood.” This is the marvel of what God has done for us. In Him there is absolute victory and complete reconciliation with God the Father.

As a means of highlighting this thought, Paul next says that in Him we also have “forgiveness of sins.” This is a complementary thought to the previous clause. The word for “forgiveness” signifies the complete release of someone from an obligation or debt. Sin’s penalty is ended through the work of Christ for all who believe.

The “redemption through His blood” looks at the work of atonement from God’s perspective. “The forgiveness of sins” looks at it from our side. One can see the work of the God/Man in this; He completed both. There is the heavenly side, and there is the earthly side. Together they unite in Him for reconciliation between the two.

Charles Ellicott notes that in order from the previous verse we see the First Cause of our salvation, which is the Father’s love. Here in verse 14, we see the Efficient Cause which is “the redemption and propitiation of the Son.”

Life application: Think soberly on what you have received from God in the giving of His Son. His blood was shed so that we could be redeemed. When one puts Jesus’ cross at the front of their thoughts, it puts all things into their proper perspective. There is an eternity of fellowship with God that lies ahead of us because of the cross of Jesus Christ.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. Colossians 1:15

Words have meaning, and those words cannot be disassociated from the context of what is being said without destroying the intent of the author. Paul’s words in this verse, and in the verses to come, are precise. They are intended to cut through heresies which were already being introduced concerning Christ Jesus at that early date. In order for those at Colossae, and all believers in all ages since then, to understand proper Christological doctrine, he now writes these words about Jesus Christ.

He says that “He is the image of the invisible God.” The word is *eikon*. It is a word which “*assumes a prototype*, of which it not merely resembles, but from which *it is drawn*.” It is then “More than a ‘shadow,’ rather it is a *replication*” (HELPS Word Studies). This replication reflects what it is replicating for us to understand. There is a stress on the words “the invisible God” to lead us to grasp that Jesus Christ is revealing that which would otherwise be unknown.

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God's perfections and His very Being are seen in Christ, being completely and accurately displayed in Him. This is explained in several different ways in the Bible. A few examples are –

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.” John 1:18

“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” John 14:9

“I and *My* Father are one.” John 10:30

What is being conveyed to us is that God is, but we cannot see Him. In order for us to understand Him in an intimate and personal way, He united with His creation in the womb of Mary, coming as Christ Jesus. Therefore, He is the image, or replication, of what we could otherwise not see. He explains the Father to us because He is one with the Father, having come from the Father. The choice of wording Paul gives here, and the many references elsewhere in Scripture are calling out for us to believe that Jesus Christ is God, nothing less. When referring to God, Hebrews 1:3 calls the Son “the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person.” Paul repeats this in 2 Corinthians 4:4. God is, and Jesus is God.

Paul next notes that He is “the firstborn over all creation.” The term is *prototokos*, coming from two words, *prótos* – “first” or “preeminent,” and *tiktó* – “bring forth.” As the scholar Bengel notes, “The *pro*, which is contained in *prototokos*, governs the genitive *ktiseos*. Time is an accident of the creature. Therefore the origin of the Son of God precedes all time.” In other words, Paul is not saying that Jesus is the Firstborn of all that is created, but He is the Firstborn prior to all that is created; He is eternal, having issued from the Father, and having preceded time itself.

Vincent's Word Studies notes that, “As image points to revelation, so first-born points to eternal preexistence.” This is logically supported by the words coming in the next verse. If this were not true, then Paul could not continue on with what he will next say, and yet he will. Further, the pattern used here in Colossians 1 is repeated in Hebrews 1 and John 1, showing that it is not a mistake by Paul, but it is rather logical and proper. There is Christ, and then there is creation which follows. Logically, Christ then is God, having issued from the Father prior to the creation of time itself.

Life application: To rob Jesus Christ of His deity is to rob God of His glory. All of the work of Jesus Christ would be ascribed to a created being, but Scripture clearly shows that salvation is of the Lord, not of a creature created by Him. If you do not accept the deity of Jesus Christ, you call God a liar. The word is clear and unambiguous concerning Jesus'

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deity. If you disbelieve, the error is not with the word, but with you. Stop listening to whatever cult you have been trained by, and accept the Word of God alone.

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