

THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST

The Fullness of Deity Dwelling in Christ

Christ: King of Kings & Lord of Lords!

Colossians 1: 15

Introduction: In the opening phrase of this great passage we have seen how Jesus Christ is the unveiling of God, as the writer of Hebrews puts it, “He is the exact representation of His nature.” (Heb 1:3) As we continue in this study with Paul’s exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ we are told in no uncertain terms that He is the Head and Creator of all things: both the universe and all that is in it, and the Church and all that pertains to it.

I. A Word About the Term *Firstborn*

- A. Paul uses this term twice in this passage:
 1. Once in regard to creation itself (v.15)
 2. Once in regard to the Church (v.18)
- B. The use of this term has been greatly abused by the original Arian heretics of the fourth century and all forms of the Arian heresy since (Jehovah’s Witnesses to name one). Fortunately, even among the church fathers, Athanasius for one, the term has been well explained and never understood to mean that Christ actually had a beginning, as in the first to be created. (See the Council of Nicaea 325 and the Nicene Creed)
- C. The meaning of the term is determined by the context and in this case refers to one having pre-eminence or first place in rank or favor.
 1. OT precedence:
 - a. Israel, the nation, is called God’s firstborn (Ex 4:22)
 - b. God says He will appoint David His firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth (Ps. 89:27)
- D. The immediately following context makes it absolutely plain that Jesus Christ is not a created being in any sense of the word, but that He is actually the Creator of EVERY THING that exists.

II. Christ the Creator / Ruler / Sustainer of the Universe and All in It

- A. In answer to the false teachers that other angelic entities are needed in order to access true spirituality, Paul exalts the glory of Christ as Creator of all things and uses specific terminology understood by his readers to show that Christ is as high in authority as one can go.
- B. Christ is also the Sustainer of the universe, the Creator of the physical laws that govern it, and the end for Whom all things exist and to Whom all things are headed.

III. Christ the Head of the Church

- A. In every sense of the word, Christ is the Creator of the Church: through Him the Church came into being and has life.
- B. Christ is the first to rise (permanently) from the dead and to break the bonds of sin and death.

IV. Christ Has First Place in Everything

- A. It was important for the Colossians to understand that they could do no better, go no higher in authority, than Jesus Christ Himself. Both in the Church (the realm of spiritual life) or in the universe (the realm and existence of everything) Jesus Christ is the Head, the Firstborn in rank and privilege, He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords!
- B. It is important for us to understand this as well. Our own Savior, Guide, Friend, Lord & Master is none other than God incarnate, the Eternal Son, Who has all authority and power and dominion in heaven and on earth. We can appeal to none higher and no one nor anything can trump His Divine power and authority. We have direct and welcome access to the One Who controls the universe and all that is in it.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 1: 15-20
(NASB)

