

## Lesson 5: “Jesus, Head of Creation” Colossians 1:15-17

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*Colossians 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

Before us today we have one of the great treasures of Holy Scripture in regards to the majestic transcendency of Jesus Christ. In these three verses, Paul shatters the argument that Jesus is anything less than the God and Lord of all heaven and earth. In six powerful statements he proclaims that Jesus is ...

1. SOURCE of all creation
2. PROTOTYPE of all creation
3. ARCHITECT of all creation
4. PURPOSE of all creation
5. PREDECESOR of all creation and
6. CONTROLLER of all creation

We will return to these, one by one, as these six blockbuster claims will be our outline.

Realize that these truths are not shared in a vacuum, but are in response to a philosophical attack on the church of Colossae, and indeed all the fledging churches of the first century. Paul knew that the heart of Christian doctrine was the foundational belief that the Jesus Christ who walked the earth was fully God in human skin. And this key belief of our faith is challenged yet today by many who diminish the Godhead and Lordship of Jesus. Therefore this passage is a critical one in our defense of this great truth. Let us learn its teachings well.

Hymnwriter, Charles Wesley, captured the essence of this key belief in his carol, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” with this phrase (singing it): “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity!”

### 1. Jesus – SOURCE of all creation - “He is the image of the invisible God”

The apostle John writes in his gospel what we all know to be true: “no one has seen God at any time.” “But,” he goes on to say, “the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him”, referring of course to Jesus Christ in the flesh. (John 1:18) If Paul meant that Jesus was merely similar to the Father, he would have used the ancient Greek word *homoion*, which speaks merely of similar appearance. But rather, he used the Greek work *eikon*, which refers to an exact representation or likeness. Our English equivalent is the word *icon*. But Jesus was far more than a statue to point us to God. He was God Himself in skin. Remember, Jesus told his disciples:

**John 14:7,9** “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him. ... He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

As God, ever existing outside of time, space and matter, it is easy to see that Jesus was the very SOURCE of creation. Where did creation come from? – It came from the mind, heart and hand of God – Jesus being the chief person of the Godhead through whom it came, as we will see. He is the “uncaused cause” of creation, for before creation HE WAS in eternal existence.

### 2. Jesus – PROTOTYPE of all creation - “the firstborn of all creation”

Mark well that this does NOT teach that Jesus was the first created being, though our English translation might lead us to get confused. Rather, “firstborn” in the Bible typically refers to the first in status or authority. Romans 8:29 refers to Jesus as “firstborn among many brethren” = first and head in the line of believers. Hebrews 1:6 says the Father brought “the firstborn into the world,” = the head

of the world brought into His world. And it goes on to say *“and let all the angels of God worship Him,”* showing He was not created but to be worshipped by creation.

In no way does the title “firstborn” indicate that Jesus is less than God. In fact, the ancient Rabbis called Yawhew Himself “Firstborn of the World” (Rabbi Bechai).

This is all the more clear when we realize that the Greek word translated “firstborn” is *“prototokos.”* “Tokos” is a birth, and *“proto”* refers to “the original model of” as in our word, “prototype.” So Jesus was not the first one born, or created. He was the prototype on which all created future births were patterned after! He was the perfect model for all of creation, who preceded creation as the only begotten Son of God.

### **3. Jesus – ARCHITECT of all creation - “for by Him all things were created”**

New Testament Scripture makes it clear that of the three persons of the Godhead, the Son Jesus was the primary force of creation. Yes, in Genesis 1:1-2, *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”* and *“the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”* So the Father and the Spirit were clearly involved. But mark these Scriptures:

**John 1:3** *All things came into being through Him [the Word = Jesus ], and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

**1 Corinthians 8:6** *...There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.*

**Hebrews 1:1-2** *God ... has spoken to us in His Son, ... through whom also He made the world.*

Our passage of the day is also clear and most detailed.

**Colossians 1: 16** *For <sup>by</sup> 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.*

As will be demonstrated in the rest of the letter, the Colossian heresy seemed taken with an elaborate angelology, which effectively placed angels as mediators between God and man. Paul emphasized that whatever ranks of spirit beings there may be, Jesus created them all and they all ultimately answer to Him. Jesus apparently both planned and enacted the creation of all – including the heavens, angels, world and underworld. He is indeed the master ARCHITECT of everything *“seen and unseen.”*

### **4. Jesus – PURPOSE of all creation - “all things have been created ... for Him.”**

Jesus was not a “footnote” in God’s book of creation, but the centerpiece of all God wanted to do in creation. He is the reason for life, and specifically the reason for my life.

**Ephesians 1:20-22** *{God the Father} raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet ...*

When I truly come to realize that all of creation is “for Him,” and not for me, and that I am His, “bought with a price,” I will rightly seek to glorify Jesus as my chief aim in life.

**1 Corinthians 6:20** *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

### **5. Jesus – PREDECESOR of all creation - “He is before all things”**

There was life before creation – the eternal life of God in never-beginning existence. We don’t know a lot about what was happening, but the Scripture does give us a glimpse.

- a. His followers to be were “foreknown” and “predestined”

**Romans 8:29** *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son*

- b. Jesus was chosen to be the “Lamb of God” to save the world

**Acts 2:23** *This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross*

**Revelation 13:8** *All who dwell on the earth will worship Him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

## 6. Jesus – CONTROLLER of all creation - “in Him all things hold together”

Did you know? – The earth travels around the sun about eight times the speed of a bullet fired from a gun, and never falls out of orbit? The power it takes to split an atom is the same power as it takes to power a city the size of New York? – and it takes the same power to hold each atom in the universe together, and NOT blow up? Yes, He is in control, and I can trust Him.

**Job 1:7** *He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.* (and this was written when common belief was that the earth was riding on the back of a giant ancient animal)

**Job 38:32-35** *Can you lead forth a constellation in its season? And guide the Bear with her satellites? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens or fix their rule over the earth? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that an abundance of water will cover you? Can you send forth lightnings that they may go and say to you, “Here we are?” Jesus can and does!*

## SO WHAT FOR ME?

Since Jesus is the SOURCE of all creation, I must acknowledge that all life has its beginning in Him, by divine intent and calculated execution. The source of all life is a “Who” not a “what.”

Since Jesus is the PROTOTYPE of all creation, then I am created in His image, made to be like Him, and I must strive in His strength to be the best representation of Jesus to others.

Since Jesus is the ARCHITECT of all creation, I accept who I am as His perfect will for my life.

Since Jesus is the PURPOSE of all creation, I must find my purpose in Him.

Since Jesus is the PREDECESOR of all creation, I must come to realize that in love, He foreknew me and chose me to be His own before time began.

Since Jesus is the CONTROLLER of all creation, I must know that He will ultimately cause all things to be for His good purposes and that I must not doubt His control.

i. Comets have vapor trails up to 10,000 miles long. If you could capture all that vapor, and put it in a bottle, the amount of vapor actually present in the bottle would take up less than 1 cubic inch of space.

ii. Saturn’s rings are 500,000 miles in circumference, but only about a foot thick.

iii. If the sun were the size of a beachball and put on top of the Empire State Building, the nearest group of stars would be as far away as Australia is to the Empire State Building.

iv. The earth travels around the sun about eight times the speed of a bullet fired from a gun.

v. There are more insects in one square mile of rural land than there are human beings on the entire earth.

vi. A single human chromosome contains twenty billion bits of information. If written in ordinary books, in ordinary language, it would take about four thousand volumes.