

Jesus – The Firstborn of All Creation
Colossians 1:15-18

When the apostle Paul writes to the church of Colossae, He refers to Jesus with the title as “the firstborn of all creation.”

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** over all creation. (Col 1:15, NIV)

What is the apostle stating about Jesus? Is this literal in regard to birth order – that He was created before Adam or before anything? Or is Paul speaking figuratively about Jesus’ prominence or both?

1. Here is an example of how a passage can be broken down to help you observe and understand the passage. What are your observations of Colossians 1:15-18? Share your findings with others in the class. Remember: the more you observe, the less you need to interpret!

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers 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.

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (Col 1:15-18, NIV)

2. A syllogism is a form of deductive reasoning that consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Do you see the apostle Paul making a logical argument here?

Major Premise:

Minor Premise:

Conclusion:

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Teacher Notes

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There are many ways of breaking down a passage to help one understand it, and this is one example. Whatever the technique, the main point is to help the student with his skill of observation.

“The Son is the image of the invisible God” should be observed as a literal statement.

“the firstborn over all creation” should be observed as a figurative statement.

There are numerous observations that can be made and the student should not be satisfied with a single observation as the “answer.” The more he observes, the better a student of God’s word he will be.

Among some of the observations of the apostle’s statement of Jesus Christ as the firstborn over all Creation is that it is a title of honor, in recognition of His supreme rank among beings: preexisting and mediating Creation, incarnate on earth, and, after His death and resurrection, glorified and enthroned.

2. A syllogism is a form of deductive reasoning that consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Do you see the apostle Paul making a logical argument here?

Major Premise:

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

Minor Premise:

Jesus Christ preexisted and mediated Creation (Col 1:16-18).

Conclusion:

Therefore Jesus Christ is God.

Paul makes the case for Jesus' preeminent position, because of His exclusive role in carrying out God's plan. Preeminent and before all things, because as the "head of the church" and "firstborn from the dead," Jesus Christ the Son of God is deserving of worship just as His Father was in the Old Testament.

Jesus is the essential agent of restoring Creation corrupted by Adam's sin (Gen 3:1-24).

Through Christ, human beings, recovering their image of God, restore their broken relationship with God.

Through Christ, both sin and death are eliminated from existence (Rev 20:7-15).

Through Christ, a new earth replaces the cursed one (Rev 21:1-27).

Jesus is the essential agent of fulfilling God's promises to Abraham.