

Knowing Christ

in Relation to Creation and to the Church

Colossians 1:15-18

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Paul truly wants us to know Jesus and from that knowledge understand God, so we can live our lives responding in a manner that is pleasing to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul, in Colossians 1:13-15, gives us insight into knowing Jesus Christ in relation to us and in relation to God. Christ is our King and Redeemer, who paid the price for our sins with His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus Christ is God the Father's beloved son, His unique, one-of-a-kind, sinless Son. He is the perfect likeness of God. We can only know God, and have a relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus' resurrection gave us a bridge to God the Father and eternal life in Christ's kingdom. We will continue looking at who Jesus is in relation to creation and the church in Colossians 1:15-18.

Colossians 1:13-18

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 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.

Jesus Christ's Relationship to Creation

★ **15 ... 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.**

Colossians 1:15-17 talks about Christ in relation to His Creation. The last phrase in verse 15, “*the firstborn of all creation,*” reveals Jesus Christ as **preeminent** over all things. **What does preeminent mean when we are talking about Jesus Christ?**

Pastor and author, Chip Brogan, gives an understandable definition and example of the preeminence of Jesus Christ. He defines “preeminence” as a lofty word which means the highest place of ascendancy, above all, over all, surpassing all, to the point that nothing and no one else can even come close.

Imagine you are away from the city looking east at the dark sky with the moon and stars shining brightly and the sun begins to rise. Light from the

moon and stars is completely overwhelmed by the sun. The sun outshines these lesser lights in a glory that surpasses them and turns night into day and darkness into light. The sun has preeminence.

God's purpose is for His Son to have preeminence; to have a place of supremacy and ascendancy above all humanity.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Nothing else remains when Christ has preeminence. All enemies are destroyed, all resistance is eliminated, every tongue confesses and every knee bows. Jesus is "*the radiance of God's glory.*"

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Gerry Anderson, in his sermon on Colossians 1:13-18, gives five reasons why "*the firstborn of all creation,*" must mean Jesus is **preeminent** over all creation.

- First of all the context teaches Christ's exalted place. The context is not speaking of a series of events or chronological order. It is placing Christ first, meaning preeminent, highest, above all else.

Philippians 2:9-11 **9** Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Secondly, Jesus is the firstborn **of** all creation, not **in** all creation. The word, **of**, means Christ is not part of creation. He was not created. Jesus Christ has a preeminent place in comparison to creation.

John 1:1-2 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

- A third point can be seen in Psalm 89:27-29. These verses are some of the first to show “*firstborn*” being used in terms of rank, not chronological order.

Psalm 89:27-29 27 I will also make him *My firstborn*, the highest of the kings of the earth. 28 I will maintain My favor for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him. 29 So I will establish his descendants forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

These verses are talking about David, but more importantly they refer to the preeminence of the Messianic line of David. David was not the first of all kings, but he was the highest of all kings, or preeminent. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, is in the lineage of David so the verses are referring to the Messiah as being firstborn, meaning He is preeminent.

- Fourthly, Christ cannot be created if he is the creator of everything. Nothing can create itself. Verse 16 says, “**For by Him all things were created.**” Jesus Christ created all things, not all other things, proclaiming Him as preeminent.

- Finally, Christ cannot be the only begotten if He is the first begotten of many. Jesus Christ is uniquely born of God the Father, unlike anyone else. Firstborn does not speak of Christ as being created, it speaks of Him as preeminent.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Looking at all of verse 16 we see that Jesus Christ **produced**, or created, all things. *“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.”* Christ is not only preeminent over all things, He produced all things. Jesus is the creator of all things either directly or indirectly. You may cook, or create, a meal for your family, but Christ created, or produced, every ingredient. Looking back at John 1:1 and 2 we see that Jesus Christ was present at creation, He existed eternally with God, “with” referring to His distinction from the Father, and He is same in nature as God the Father. Jesus Christ created, or **produced**, all things.

John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.

Hebrews 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world.

Jesus Christ is not only preeminent over all things and produced all things, He **preceded** all things. Verse 17 states, *“He is before all things.”* Jesus

Christ existed prior to all of creation, which is part of being the creator. The pronoun “He” is emphatic in verse 17, once again, pointing to Jesus as the preeminent one who without a doubt came before all else.

Isaiah 44:6 “This is what the LORD says, *He who is* the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of armies: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

The last point Gerry Anderson made in Jesus Christ’s relationship with creation is that he is the **preserver** of all creation. “*And in Him all things hold together,*” is the last phrase in verse 17. Christ’s power sustains and preserves us. Crops grow, flowers bloom, the sun rises, and life continues because Jesus holds all things together. We should recognize Christ as the creator as well as the sustainer of all things. He is the preserver of all that exists.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- What is Jesus Christ’s relation to creation?

Jesus Christ is **preeminent** over all creation. He is the **producer** (creator) of all things and He **preceded** all things that exist. Christ is the **preserver** of all creation.

Jesus Christ's Relationship to the Church

★ 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.

Colossians 1:18 refers to Christ's relationship to the Church. "**He is also head of the body, the church,**" in this phrase the body of Christ is referred to as the church, although Jesus is the head. The head is essential to the body just as Jesus is essential to the church. Without the head, the body cannot live. We must have the head to tell the body what to do, to walk, hold a pencil, breath, etcetera. Christ is the head of the body, He is the leader of the church. He has the power, the ability, and the place to accomplish His desires in the church in spite of flawed people in the body. Christ, *as the head of the body*, is the leader of the church, and being that, **He is our leader.**

Ephesians 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 4:15-16 **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *that is*, Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper

working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

Christ is not only the head of the body, our leader, **He is our life**, “*He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.*” Jesus was the first one to be resurrected from the dead, never to die again. Lazarus was resurrected to mortality, to die again later. Jesus is the One that is firstborn from the dead, preeminent over all the dead, and resurrected first to life. His resurrection opened the door for our resurrection, so that we can have eternal life with our Lord. **Jesus Christ is our life** and as our life we should honor Him so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

1 John 5:11-12 **11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12** The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and have *it* abundantly.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

All this leads us to the main point of who Jesus is, **He is our Lord**, our ruler and king. The last phrase of verse 18 says, “*So that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.*” Hopefully these verses will reveal Jesus to us

as the Creator, the image of the invisible God, our Deliverer, our Redeemer, One who is preeminent over all, the head of the church, the One who has first place in everything. Seeking Christ as first place in our lives, gives Him His rightful place as our Lord.

Mathew 18:28 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

Romans 10:9-13 **9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10** for with the heart *a person* believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME.” **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; **13** for “EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Revelation 19:16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written: “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Paul shows us who Jesus Christ is in Colossians 1:13-18, and he reveals the deity of Christ as well. It is imperative that we realize who Christ is so that we can respond to Him accordingly. The first step of spiritual growth is knowing who Jesus Christ is and then we can learn how to respond to Him.

- Who is Jesus Christ to you?