

Colossians 1

15 *He is the image of the invisible God*

- “image” - *eikon* - “real and essential embodiment, as distinguished from mere likeness (sameness). - Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers
- “Paul used the work *eikon* to embody a very precise and important concept” ... i.e. that “Christ is the image of God in full, exact and total essence. Paul emphasizes that Christ as the ‘*eikon* of God’ -i.e.- is totally and absolutely equal to God” - Vermon Pierre
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- A verse that clarifies how this word is used in the NT is **Hebrews 10:1** “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image (NASB - form, ESV - realities) of the things
- The word “form” in **Philippians 2:6** presents the same idea - “existing in the form of God”, “being in very nature God” (NIV)
- **Hebrews 1:3** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (being)
 - “nature” - *hypostasis* - underlying state or substance, essence. (“being of one substance with the father”)
- **John 1:18** No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (made him known, declared him, revealed him)
- **John 14:9** Whoever has seen my has seen the Father

the firstborn of all creation (begotten before all creation)

- “firstborn” - *prōtokos* - priority in time and preeminence in position denotes supremacy, preeminence, or first in rank (Had Paul meant the one first created he would have use the work *prōtoktistos* - first-created.
- **Psalms 89:27** And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.
- **Hebrews 1:6** when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”
- “begotten of His Father before all worlds” - Nicene Creed
- The value of the birthright is illustrated in Jacob’s scheming to take it from Esau.

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*

- **Hebrews 1:2** through whom also He made the world.
- **John 1:3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

17 *He is before all things*

- “*And he is before all things*”.... Not only in dignity, being preferable to angels and men in his nature, names, offices, and works, and worthy of more honour than all creatures; but he is before them in existence, as he must needs be, since they are all made by him; he was not only before John the Baptist, his forerunner, before Abraham who saw his day and was glad, before the first man was made, but before the angels were in being, or the heavens and the earth, or any creature were formed; and therefore must be God, who is from everlasting to everlasting - Gill
- to obviate all exceptions to what he had said before, the apostle doth expressly assert (what was implied before) Christ’s pre-existence to all the things that were created, and therefore that he himself was not made, but eternally begotten, and so did exist, and was actually before all creatures in causality, dignity, and time; which proves his eternity, (Poole)
- **Proverbs 8:22-30** "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old ...
- **Micah 5:2** But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
- **John 8:58** before Abraham was born, I am.
- **John 17:5** Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

and in Him all things hold together

- *sunistemi* - lit. to set together. Conveys the idea of consistence, harmony, congruence.
- He did not create the world then sit back and allow natural laws to take over and run their course.
- **Hebrews 1:3** and upholds all things by the word of His power.
- He is not their Cause only, in an initial sense He is for ever their Bond, their Order, their Law, the ultimate secret which makes the whole universe, seen and unseen, a cosmos, not a chaos." - Moule
- **Acts 17:28** In him we live and move and have our being'
- Athanasius of Alexandria (circa AD 360) wrote "Christ, the All-powerful, All-holy Word of the Father, spreads His power over all things everywhere, enlightening things seen and unseen, holding and binding all together (*sunistao*) in Himself. Nothing is left empty of His presence, but to all things and through all, severally and collectively, He is the Giver and Sustainer of life....He, the Wisdom of God, holds the universe in tune together. He it is Who, binding all with each, and ordering all things by His will and pleasure, produces the perfect unity of nature and the harmonious reign of law. While He abides unmoved forever with the Father, He yet moves all things by His own appointment according to the Father's will."
- The most basic of all scientific principles is implied in these two verses (Colossians 1:16-17), that is, the principle of conservation of mass/energy, or "all things." According to this principle, nothing is now being either created or annihilated—only conserved, as far as quantity is concerned. One state of matter can be changed to another (e.g., liquid to solid); one type of energy can be converted to another (e.g., electrical energy to light energy); and under some conditions, matter and energy can be interchanged (e.g., nuclear fission); but the total quantity of mass/energy is always conserved. This law—also called the First Law of Thermodynamics—is the best-proved law of science, but science cannot tell us why it is true. The reason nothing is now being created is because Christ created all things in the past. The reason why nothing is now being annihilated is because all things are now being sustained by Him. If it were not so, the "binding energy" of the atom, which holds its structure together, would collapse, and the whole universe would disintegrate into chaos - Henry Morris

18 He is also the head of the body, the church

- In the same way as he is the creator, sustainer and ruler of the universe, is he head of the body. Having established it by his atoning death and resurrection, he now sustains and directs every part.
- **Ephesians 1:22** (parallel passage) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

and he is the beginning the firstborn from the dead

- "*beginning*" - it denotes, as in philosophical Greek, a first principle, originating cause, source & origin. His body, the Church, begins in him, dating and deriving from him its "all in all" (Pulpit Commentary)
- She is His new creation, Through water by the word
- "*firstborn from (out of) the dead*" - Christ becomes the source, of a new humanity, a new creation. Christ's resurrection is the fountainhead from which flows the life and power of the church. "The Divine Firstborn, who is before and over all things, wins his title a second time for his earthly brethren's sake. As he appears "out of the dead," born anew from the dark womb of the grave, the Father declares to him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"; the Church exclaims, "My Lord and my God"; ; "all authority in heaven and on earth" becomes his; he is made "Firstborn over many brethren," who call him Lord; and proceeds to "subdue all things unto himself" (PC)
- **John 11:25** I am the resurrection and the life
- **1 Corinthians 15:20** Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

that in everything (all things) he might be(come) preeminent

- lit. - that He Himself may (thus) become the One holding the first place,"
- **Philippians 2:9-11** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- Contrast **3 John 1:9** I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

19 For in Him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell

- **Colossians 2:9** For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
- “fulness” - The Gnostics used the term (pleroma) for the assemblage of emanations, or angelic powers, coming from God.
- dwell - *katoikeo* - to take up permanent abode. West - *katoikeo* means all the divine fulness is at home permanently in the Lord Jesus, at home in the sense that this divine fulness was not something added to His Being that was not natural to Him, but that it was part of His essential Being as part of His very constitution, and that permanently.

20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

- cp. **Phil. 2:11** - every knee, every tongue. Reconciliation, in the sense that all that has been put out of joint, by mans sin, will be put right. All of the universe, without exception will be ruled by Christ
- Universal sovereignty, not universal salvation
- I think he means that the blood of Christ has secured the victory of God over the universe in such a way that the day is coming when “all things” that are in the new heavens and the new earth will be entirely reconciled to God with no rebel remnants.- Piper
- **2 Corinthians 5:18-22** All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.