

Preeminence; Colossians 1:15-20

I. The Image

A. "The image of the invisible God"

1. Visible expression
2. "Jesus brought God into the human sphere of understanding. He manifested God."¹
3. John 1:18 (ESV); No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.
4. "The point is that in Christ the invisible God became visible. He shared the same substance as God and made God's character known in this earthly sphere of existence. The revelation of God in Christ is such that we can actually see him, even with all of our limitations."²
5. Jesus is the personal manifestation of God; wherever Jesus is, that is where God is

B. Firstborn of all creation

1. We must remove the idea of "being born first" from this word
2. Psalm 89:27 (ESV); And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.
3. Out of the 8 times it is used in the New Testament only once does it refer to being born first (and even then Luke is referring to Jesus)
4. Luke 2:7 (ESV); And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.
5. It is used to express "a special relationship with God, one of privilege"³
6. This unique relationship is spelled out for us in John
7. John 1:1-5 (ESV); ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

C. Jesus manifests the Father to us — when we see Him, we see the Father

II. The Creator

A. Colossians 1:16-17 (RSV); ¹⁶ for **in him** all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created **through him** and **for him**. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

B. Jesus' role as image bearer and firstborn also includes creator... of the universe!

1. Genesis 1:1 (ESV); In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
2. The rest of Genesis chapter one details the days of creation
3. "And God said"
 - a) Jesus is the Word of God ("In the beginning was the Word")
 - b) When God said, "Let there be (lights, water, earth, creatures, flying things, fish, etc.)" Jesus created it
 - c) It truly is a very unique and special relationship that Jesus has with God
4. Jesus' creating doesn't stop with the 7 days in Genesis 1
 - a) "Thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities"

¹ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 215.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

- b) Romans 13:1 (ESV); Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.
- c) Jesus is responsible for — everything!
- 5. In Him — “It should be understood as in his mind or in his sphere of influence and responsibility. Practically, it means that Jesus conceived of creation and its complexities. Creation was his idea.” ⁴
- 6. Through Him — Jesus is the hammer and nails, the one who did the building
- 7. For Him — “The literal expression is “unto him.” This means that Jesus is the goal of all creation. Everything exists to display his glory, and ultimately he will be glorified in his creation.” ⁵
- C. Hebrews 1:1–3 (ESV); ¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

III. The Head

- A. Colossians 1:18 (ESV); And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
- B. This is such an important statement — Christ is the head of the church
 - 1. He is the one we listen to
 - 2. Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV); “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—
 - 3. Matthew 17:5 (ESV); He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”
 - 4. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (miraculously)
 - 5. The Apostles wrote down the truth they received (through the Holy Spirit) for us to follow
 - 6. “The head of every man is Christ” 1 Corinthians 11:3 (in part)
- C. Sometimes we get carried away by man’s teaching or charisma
 - 1. “Name it and claim it” teaching
 - 2. People who claim to have a special understanding
 - 3. People who claim to receive revelations directly from God
 - 4. We must remember who our head is and to whom we must listen
 - 5. We must remember that God gave us His Gospel,
 - 6. Jude 3 (ESV); Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.
 - 7. 2 Peter 1:3 (ESV); His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
 - 8. There is nothing “newer” coming from anyone else
 - 9. God has delivered to us everything He wants us to have — and that happens to be everything we need for this life and the life to come (eternity)

IV. Preeminence

⁴ Ibid, 217.

⁵ Ibid, 218.

- A. To hold the highest rank, be first, have first place⁶
- B. Ephesians 1:22–23 (ESV);²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
- C. Jesus is the very manifestation of God
- D. Jesus is the Creator of the universe
- E. Jesus is the Head of the church
- F. Jesus is preeminent!

⁶ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 892.