

**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.** Colossians 1:15 ESV

If anyone claims that Jesus Christ was only human, or simply a gifted teacher or a great prophet sent by God, yet not truly divine in nature, our passage today crushes that argument.

As Paul continues a rather lengthy introduction and welcome letter to the church of Colossae, he switches gears slightly from discussing our duty to walk in proper manner and be grateful to God for all He has done, to what is perhaps one of the most authoritative outlines of Christ's divinity.

Paul says Christ is **the image of the invisible God**. The Greek word used for *image* is *eikōn*, and it means a representation or resemblance. It can be applied that Christ is a complete representation of the Father in heaven in character, power, and will. The author of Hebrews says, **"He [Christ] is the radiance of the glory of God [the Father] and the exact imprint of his nature,"** (Heb. 1:2).

Here we have a clear picture of the true divinity and majesty of Christ – He has the splendor, power, and authority of His Father, and as we'll see a few verses later, the Father is truly pleased to allow His own fullness to dwell in Christ. Perfect, holy unity in the heavenly throne room!

We also see that God the Father is **invisible** to mankind. We read in John 1:18 that **"no one has ever seen God."** But wait, didn't Moses talk to God face to face (see: Exodus 33:11)? Well, if you read just a few more verses in that chapter you'll see that the Father told Moses, **"you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live,"** (v20), and that He only allowed Moses to see His back as He passed by. That alone was enough to cause Moses's face to shine so brightly he had to cover his head because it frightened the Israelites (cf: Exodus 34:29)!

Yet there is one person who has seen God face to face: Christ Jesus, our Lord. In John 6:46 Jesus said, **"Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father,"** clearly indicating His own divine place in heaven, and quite significantly, His absolute purity and righteousness, as without these He would, like us, not have been able to see the Father. Christ stands alone in history as being both human and sinless (cf: Rom 3:23 and 2 Cor 5:21). His unique position as the only begotten Son of God is clearly evident and cannot be dismissed without rejecting the entirety of the gospel.

Finally, we see here that Christ is **the firstborn of all creation**. It is clear from the preceding verses that Christ was co-creator with God the Father, so we should not

conclude that Paul was saying the Father created Christ before He created us. Instead, there are two meaningful understandings.

In Romans 8:11 we read, ***“If the Spirit of him [the Father] who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”*** And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:20, ***“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*** Therefore, Christ is the firstborn of the resurrection, which all Christians will eventually participate in. The Father raised Christ from the dead in the same manner He will raise us from the dead and clothe us with an imperishable new body.

Secondly, ***firstborn*** should also be interpreted to mean that Christ has preeminence or rank over all creation. Traditionally, the first-born son ranked highest in the family, and similarly Christ ranks highest above all created beings, both in heaven and earth. And we see this outlined just a few verses later in our chapter here when Paul writes, ***“And he [Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”***

As we continue unpacking the next few verses of this chapter, we’ll learn more about Christ’s incredible nature, work, authority, and power. There is no room in any argument to place Jesus in the category of prophet, teacher, or simple moral example. He is divine, the Son of God. He is the creator. He ranks highest in all creation in heaven and earth. He is the visible image of the invisible God, the Father. No one has ever or will ever be like Christ. And He deserves our utmost praise, adoration, worship, and obedience.

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