

Message #5**Colossians 1:15-19**

There were many perplexing doctrinal matters plaguing the church in Colossae, but the first one Paul tackles is the deity of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wanted all to know that Jesus Christ is God. He is not someone who is less than God, He is fully God.

JESUS CHRIST IS FULLY GOD, AND ALL CREATION NEEDS TO HONOR HIM AS FULLY GOD, FOR THIS IS WHAT PLEASES THE FATHER.

Any teaching that does not exalt Jesus Christ as fully God is a false teaching.

Any religion that makes Jesus Christ less than fully God is a false religion.

RELATIONSHIP #1 – Jesus Christ is fully God because of His relationship with God the Father. **1:15**

Connection #1 - Jesus Christ is the “image” of the invisible God. **1:15a**

The Greek word used for “image” here basically has to do with two ideas:

1) Exact representation, and 2) Exact manifestation.

Paul uses a present tense in the verb “is,” which means he is saying Jesus Christ is continually the exact representation and exact manifestation of the invisible God.

Now an image is something that enables us to visualize something in a knowable and concrete way. God the Father is a spirit and is invisible. In fact, no man has even seen God the Father (John 1:18; Exodus 33:20). Jesus Christ is the full, exact manifestation of the invisible God the Father. Christ, Himself, said “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30) and “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Connection #2 – Jesus Christ is the “firstborn” of all creation. **1:15b**

This phrase has been used by various heretics and cults in an attempt to prove Jesus is really less than God. The first to tamper with the true meaning of the verse was a heretic named Arius. In the 4th century, Arius, a heretical preacher from Alexandria, Egypt, came up with the bizarre interpretation that the term “firstborn” meant Christ was a created being who was lesser than God. In A.D. 325, Arius was condemned a heretic by the churches at the Council of Nicea.

Justo Gonzalez describes the scene: “The council met in the city of Nicea, in Bythinia, in A.D. 325, and was attended by more than three hundred bishops” (*A History of Christian Thought*, Vol. 1, p. 273).

The phrase “the firstborn of all creation” means Jesus Christ gave birth to everything created and sits in a unique relationship with the Father as heir of all things (Rev. 1:17).

(Proof #1) - This is precisely what the context is saying.

Notice carefully the conjunction which begins **verse 16**, “For,” it gives a reason why He is fully God; because He gave birth to all things.

(Proof #2) - Other passages clearly express the same teaching. John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2-3

(Proof #3) - Other passages state Christ is eternal. Micah 5:2; John 8:58

(Proof #4) - The biblical concept of “firstborn,” when related to the father, speaks of the heir who is entitled to inheritance.

(Proof #5) - The word “firstborn” can mean first in time or first in rank.

When it is used of “time” it refers to priority, when used of “rank” it refers to sovereignty (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 392). When the word “first” is used in composition with another word, it usually means rank, not time.

A. In Matthew 23:6 the word is used to refer to “chief” seats—seats of highest rank.

B. In Luke 14:7 the word refers to “places of honor”—places of the highest rank.

C. In Acts 24:5 it is used of “ringleader”—person of highest rank.

There is one key reference in the O.T. that makes it very clear that the term “firstborn” refers to highest rank and that is Psalm 89:27.

What Paul is saying in **verse 15** is that Jesus Christ is fully God, He gave birth to all creation and is the first ranked over everything.

The fact that Christ visibly displays the exact image of God and the fact that He gave birth to all creation and the fact that the Father deems Him to be heir over all things clearly proves Jesus Christ is God!

RELATIONSHIP #2 – Jesus Christ is fully God because of His relationship with all of creation.
1:16-17

These verses make it very clear that Jesus Christ was much more than just some high-ranking spirit-being; He is the one who created the whole spirit world.

Fact #1 - Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Creator of all things. **1:16**

Scripture NEVER ascribes creation to anyone except God (Gen. 1:1; Isaiah 42:5; 45:12; 48:13; 51:13). In this verse are three extremely important and different prepositions.

(Truth #1) - All creation was designed in Jesus Christ. **1:16a**

The first preposition “by” is literally “in.” What this means is that the idea for creation was designed by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the one who conceived the plan of creation, which includes things in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible, including thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities.

(Truth #2) - All creation was built by Jesus Christ. **1:16b**

The actual construction process of creation was carried out by Jesus Christ. He planned everything, He designed everything and then He built everything.

(Truth #3) - All creation was created for Jesus Christ. **1:16c**

The whole original purpose of creation was to recognize the glory of God and the glory of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ created all things to make a powerful, wonderful statement about God’s glory and His glory. God’s glory is His glory!

Fact #2 - Jesus Christ is the sovereign sustainer of all things. **1:17**

In the original text, the pronoun “He” is intensive and excludes all others.

(Reality #1) - He is before all things. **1:17a**

This has reference to time and means Jesus Christ existed before anything was ever created. He is eternally God (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2; 8:58).

(Reality #2) - He is holding together all things. **1:17b**

I doubt we can even begin to grasp this, but Jesus Christ is the one who holds everything in creation together.

RELATIONSHIP #3 – Jesus Christ is fully God because of His relationship to the Church.
1:18

The Church of God is to be a place focused on God. It is God’s Church (Acts 20:28). By virtue of Christ’s position in God’s Church, He is God.

Fact #1 - Jesus Christ is head of the Church. **1:18a**

(Implication #1) - Jesus Christ is to be in charge of the Church.

(Implication #2) - Jesus Christ is to be the focus of the Church.

The main focus of the Church must always be Jesus Christ—His Word and His will.

(Implication #3) - Jesus Christ will always be connected to the Church.

As long as there is life, the head is always connected to the body. Notice carefully the head of the Church is a person, not a place.

Fact #2 - Jesus Christ is the beginning of the Church. **1:18b**

What this means is that Jesus Christ is the originating source of the Church. The whole Church Age and the whole Grace Age began in the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Fact #3 - Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead. **1:18c**

Jesus Christ was the first to be raised from the dead in a new resurrected body that would never suffer or die again. This stupendous act not only secures our resurrection, but it also proves that He is God.

Fact#4 – Jesus Christ is to be preeminent in everything. **1:18d**

Grammatically, the “so that” introduces a purpose that is connected to all of the above facts. The reason why He is entitled to have first place in everything connected to the Church is because He is the head, He started it and He died for it and was raised as proof that He was God.

He deserves the preeminence in everything in the Church because the Church is His.

Verse 19 is critical for it gives us a reason why it is so critical to honor Christ as God—this is what pleases the Father. No one will have a relationship with the Father apart from a proper perspective of and relationship with Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

It was pleasing to the Father to have the fullness of God lived out in Jesus Christ. It is pleasing to the Father when we honor Jesus Christ as fully God. You can talk about the Father all you want, but until your perspective of Jesus Christ is one that honors Him as fully God, you will NEVER please the Father.

All deity, all sovereignty, all divine attributes and all power are found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is 100% God. All that God is, Christ is. When a church or an individual honors Jesus Christ at this level, it pleases the Father. We should honor Jesus Christ as fully God for this is what pleases the Father.

Full salvation is only found in Jesus Christ, for He is fully God, who alone can fully and finally save your soul.