



3. The firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15)
  - a. The problem presented
    - (1) A common definition
      - a) Dictionary usage: First brought forth; first in the order of nativity; eldest; as the first-born son.
      - b) Scriptural usage
        - i) Esau (Genesis 25:25; Genesis 27:32)
        - ii) Reuben (Genesis 29:32; Genesis 35:23)
        - iii) Jesus (Matthew 1:25)
    - (2) Various solutions
      - a) What the cults might say...
        - i) Jesus was a perfect human while on earth, but that is not how he began.
        - ii) Jesus had an existence in heaven before coming to the earth, but it was not as one of the persons in an almighty, eternal triune Godhead.
        - iii) In his pre-human existence, Jesus was a created spirit being, just as angels were spirit beings created by God. Neither the angels nor Jesus existed before their creation.
        - iv) Jesus, in his pre-human existence,
          - (a) Was “the first-born of all creation” (Colossians 1:15, *NJB*)
          - (b) Was “the beginning of God’s creation” (Revelation 3:14, *RS*, Catholic edition)
        - v) Jesus was created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations.
      - b) What the Bible deniers might say... This is a mistranslation and should say that Christ is “preeminent” over all creation.
      - c) What the Bible believer might say... The passage is correct as is. In fact, it is a companion passage to John 1:1-3 and Revelation 3:14, and actually means that Jesus Christ was the creator of everything.
    - b. The twofold nature of the firstborn
      - (1) Order—the firstborn was the first man child born into the family.
      - (2) Authority
        - a) The firstborn in the family was usually given a birthright (Genesis 25:29-34).
        - b) This birthright included the right to:
          - i) Lead a family
          - ii) Receive a double inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2)



- c. Jesus Christ as the firstborn
  - (1) Not according to a physical birth
    - a) He was never born and has no beginning.
    - b) Therefore, to say that Jesus Christ is the firstborn according to the order of His birth is unscriptural.
  - (2) According to authority
    - a) A scriptural use (i.e. king David)
      - i) David was not God's firstborn by rule of order.
      - ii) Yet, he was made God's firstborn which the scripture defined as being "higher than the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:20, 27).
    - b) This understanding of the word *firstborn* matches the context of our passage.
- 4. The creator of all things (Colossians 1:16)
  - a. The who of creation
    - (1) "For by him were all things created,"
    - (2) "[A]ll things were created by him"
  - b. The what of creation (Ephesians 3:9; Revelation 10:6)
    - (1) The general
      - a) Things that are in heaven and in earth
      - b) Things that are visible and invisible
    - (2) The specifics
      - a) Thrones
      - b) Dominions
      - c) Principalities
      - d) Powers
  - c. The why of creation—"for him" (Revelation 4:11)
- 5. The preserver of all things (Colossians 1:17)
  - a. He is before all things.
    - (1) His goings forth have been from everlasting (Micah 5:2).
    - (2) He was with the Father from eternity past (John 1:1-3; John 17:5).
    - (3) This was declared practically when Christ's origins were compared to
      - a) John (John 1:30)
      - b) Abraham (John 8:58)
  - b. He is the preserver of all things.
    - (1) The concept of preservation
      - a) Preservation is the act of God by which He maintains life and soundness in that which He has brought into existence.
      - b) The Bible concept of preservation states that God's power is not only necessary to initiate His works, but that it is also necessary to keep and maintain His works (Psalm 75:3).



- c. The involvement of the Son in preservation
  - (1) By Him all things consist (Colossians 1:17).
  - (2) He upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).
- 6. The head of the body (Colossians 1:18)
  - a. The identification of the parts
    - (1) The head—Jesus Christ
      - a) The head symbolizes life (Genesis 40:16-19; Colossians 3:4).
      - b) The head is the place where the blessing is received (Genesis 48:14-20; Genesis 49:26; Proverbs 10:6; Galatians 3:14).
      - c) The head is the place of strength (Judges 16:17; Philippians 4:13).
      - d) The head is a place of judgment (1 Samuel 25:39; 2 Samuel 18:9; 1 Kings 2:32, 44; 1 Peter 2:24).
      - e) The head is the place of crowning (2 Samuel 12:30; Revelation 19:13-16).
      - f) The head is a place of joy (Isaiah 51:11; Romans 5:11).
      - g) The head is a place of salvation (Isaiah 59:17; Luke 2:11).
      - h) The head is the source of direction (Ezekiel 10:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:5).
      - i) The head is the place of authority (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23).
    - (2) The body—the church (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 2:16; Ephesians 3:6; Ephesians 4:12, 16; Ephesians 5:30; Colossians 1:24; Colossians 2:19; Colossians 3:15; Hebrews 13:3)
  - b. The description of the head
    - (1) The beginning (Revelation 1:8; Revelation 3:14; Revelation 21:6; Revelation 22:13)
    - (2) The firstborn from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Revelation 1:5, 18)
      - a) The phrase *firstborn from the dead* is a parallel statement to the phrase *first begotten of the dead* in Revelation 1:5.
      - b) The begetting of the Son (Hebrews 1:5)
        - i) The statement made—“this day have I begotten thee”
        - ii) The statement explained
          - (a) The prophecy given (Psalm 2:7)
          - (b) The prophecy accomplished
            - (i) The person identified (Hebrews 1:5; Hebrews 5:5)
            - (ii) The event identified (Acts 13:29-33; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5)



- (3) The preeminent one
- a) The word *preeminence* is found three times in the Bible, and the root word *eminent* is found four times. Understanding these occurrences lays the groundwork for grasping the preeminence of Christ.
    - i) Eminent (Ezekiel 16:24, 31, 39; Ezekiel 17:22)
    - ii) Preeminence (Ecclesiastes 3:19; Colossians 1:18; 3 John 1:9)
  - b) The word *eminent* is connected to high or elevated places and the word *preeminence* means an elevated position or rank or superiority due to merit. With this in mind, consider the areas in which Christ is preeminent.
    - i) Christ is preeminent in His origin—“who is the beginning”
      - (a) He is before all things (Micah 5:2; John 1:1; John 8:58; John 17:5, 24; Revelation 22:13).
      - (b) He created all things (John 1:3; Ephesians 3:6; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 3:14).
      - (c) He upholdeth all things (Psalm 75:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:3).
    - ii) Christ is preeminent in His position—“he is the head of the body, the church”
      - (a) He has authority over nature (Matthew 8:27).
      - (b) He has authority over powers (1 Peter 3:22).
      - (c) He is the king of glory (Psalm 2:6).
      - (d) He is equal with God (Philippians 2:6).
      - (e) He is heir to the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 23:5).
      - (f) He is the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:2; Ephesians 5:23).
    - iii) Christ is preeminent in His resurrection—“the firstborn from the dead”
      - (a) He proved hell could not hold Him (Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18).
      - (b) He proved the grave could not hold Him (Acts 2:31).
      - (c) He is the only one ever who raised Himself from the dead (John 2:19-21; John 10:17-18).
7. The fulness in Christ (Colossians 1:19)
- a. The pleasure of the Father
  - b. The fulness in Christ
    - (1) The word *fulness* in the scripture can mean a completeness or the completion of something (Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:10).
    - (2) As such, there is no lack in Him.



8. The reconciler of all things (Colossians 1:20)
    - a. The peace made
      - (1) The enmity of God and man
        - a) The wrath of God was man's lot (Psalm 2:12; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; Romans 2:8-9; Ephesians 5:6).
        - b) Man cannot stand before God's anger (Numbers 11:1; Numbers 25:3-5; Numbers 32:13).
        - c) We were the enemies of God (Psalm 7:11; Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21).
        - d) God's treatment of His enemies (Exodus 15:6; Deuteronomy 32:41)
      - (2) The person of peace (Isaiah 53:5; Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14)
    - b. The reconciliation given
      - (1) Unto Himself
      - (2) All things
- C. The Product of Salvation (Colossians 1:21-22)
1. Reconciled enemies (Colossians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Hebrews 2:17)
    - a. The reconciled
      - (1) The problem stated
        - a) In the garden, God and man were in fellowship.
        - b) This fellowship was broken at the fall and man became God's enemy by nature and practice.
        - c) This not only reached to the first couple, but to all that would come thereafter.
      - (2) The reach of the fall
        - a) Their identification—"And you"
        - b) Their consequences—"that were sometime alienated"
        - c) Their practice—"enemies in your mind by wicked works"
    - b. The reconciliation
      - (1) The time—"yet now hath"
      - (2) The reconciler—"he"
      - (3) The work—"reconciled"
      - (4) The accomplishment—"In the body of his flesh through death" (Colossians 1:22)
  2. Presented saints (Colossians 1:22); Note: This is practical as seen below.
    - a. The manner of presentation
      - (1) Holy
      - (2) Unblameable
      - (3) Unreproveable
    - b. The view of presentation—"in his sight"



## D. The Ministry of Paul (Colossians 1:23-29)

1. Paul's message (Colossians 1:23, 25-27)
  - a. The accountability in the message (Colossians 1:23)
    - (1) Their reception of the gospel
      - a) They had heard.
      - b) It had been preached to every creature under heaven.
    - (2) Their responsibility to the gospel
      - a) To continue in the faith
      - b) To be not moved away from the hope
    - (3) The outcome (see Colossians 1:22)
  - b. The accountability for the message (Colossians 1:25-27)
    - (1) Paul was MADE a minister (Colossians 1:23, 25).
    - (2) Paul was GIVEN a dispensation (Colossians 1:25-27).
      - a) To fulfil the word of God (Colossians 1:25)
      - b) To reveal the mystery (Colossians 1:26-27)
        - i) The nature of the mystery (Colossians 1:26)
          - (a) Hid from ages and from generations
          - (b) Now made manifest to His saints
        - ii) The riches of the mystery—"what is the riches of the glory of this mystery" (Colossians 1:27)
        - iii) The inclusion of this mystery—"the Gentiles"
        - iv) The nature of this mystery—"Christ in you, the hope of glory"
        - v) The conflict of this mystery
          - (a) According to Paul, this mystery had been hidden but was "now...made manifest."
          - (b) Compare this with the teachings of Christ found in John 6:56; John 14:20; John 15:5-7; John 17:26.
        - vi) The help in this mystery
          - (a) Contrary to popular thought, our commandments are more difficult than those given under the law, but the enabling is also stronger (Luke 12:48).
          - (b) An oriental student once told a Bible teacher "Our sacred books of the East contain many noble precepts. But your sacred Book, the Bible, holds not only the precepts, but the secret of how to do them—'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'"
        - vii) Other mysteries
          - (a) The incarnation (1 Timothy 3:16)
          - (b) The blindness of Israel (Romans 11:25)
          - (c) Jew and Gentile one body (Ephesians 3:3-6)
          - (d) The rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)



2. Paul's suffering (Colossians 1:24)
  - a. The rejoicing of his suffering
    - (1) For the sake of the Saviour (Acts 9:16; 2 Corinthians 4:11; Philippians 1:29)
    - (2) For the sake of the saints (2 Corinthians 1:6; Ephesians 3:13; 2 Timothy 2:10)
  - b. The accomplishment of his suffering
    - (1) Possible meanings
      - a) Paul knew he had more suffering to come.
      - b) Paul felt he had not suffered enough for the cause of Christ.
      - c) Paul felt he had not suffered as Christ had suffered.
    - (2) Regardless, Paul obviously believed it was his duty to suffer and that his suffering benefitted the body of Christ.
3. Paul's work (Colossians 1:28-29)
  - a. His preaching (Colossians 1:28)
    - (1) The manner of his preaching
      - a) Preaching
      - b) Warning (Ezekiel 3:17-21; Ezekiel 33:6-9; Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7; Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
      - c) Teaching (Acts 11:26; Acts 14:21; Acts 20:20; Acts 28:31)
    - (2) The reach of his preaching—"every man"
    - (3) The foundation of his preaching—"all wisdom"
    - (4) The goal of his preaching—"that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus"; Note: Paul is going to have a part in the presentation of the church to the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 4:15; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:11).
  - b. His labour (Colossians 1:29)
    - (1) The manner of his labour
      - a) Labour
        - i) Paul laboured (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9; 2 Corinthians 11:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:9).
        - ii) He saluted those who laboured in the work of God (Romans 16:6, 12; Philippians 4:3).
        - iii) We are called to labour (1 Corinthians 3:9, 13; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 2:7).
      - b) Striving (Romans 15:20, 30; Philippians 1:27)
    - (2) The source of the labour
      - a) The person—"His"
      - b) The power—"working, which worketh in me mightily" (Ephesians 1:19; Ephesians 3:7, 20; Philippians 2:13; Philippians 4:13)