

**Colossians - Chapter 1**  
**The Invisible God Made Known**  
**Colossians 1:15-16**

**Verse 15**

- There are two key statements that Paul makes about Jesus Christ in this verse. Both are linked together to form one central thought.

**Christ is the image of the invisible God.**

1. The Bible declares that God is a Spirit (John 4:24) and that “*No man hath seen God at any time*” (John 1:18). But the eternal God was made flesh in Bethlehem (John 1:1, 14). Jesus, “*the only begotten Son... hath declared him*” (God the Father). John 1:18
2. When Paul says that Christ is the image of the invisible God, does this mean that Christ was a derived likeness of God, similar to a picture or statue? Or does it mean that Christ was the fleshly embodiment of God?
3. Hebrews 10:1 will help us to define and understand this word “*image*” in the context. In this verse, there is a distinction drawn between shadow and substance. The law had a **shadow** of good things to come, but **not** the very image. So here, the word “*image*” is the actual thing itself, not simply a shadow or picture.
4. So, when Paul says that Christ is the image of the invisible God, he doesn't mean that Christ is simply a shadow or picture of God, but rather Christ **is** God. He is of eternal and divine substance.
5. Remember, God is invisible. So how could we have a physical revelation of something invisible?
6. Christ is, therefore, the image, or the substance of the invisible God. Christ is God in bodily form. Hebrews 1:3 declares that Christ is the express image of God's person.
  - Jesus told Philip, “*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*” John 14:9
  - Paul teaches that Christ was God manifest in the flesh. 1 Timothy 3:16
  - Since no mere creature can perfectly reveal God, Jesus Christ must be God! He is Immanuel, God with us.
7. The invisible God revealed Himself in bodily form in Bethlehem, which brings us to the next statement in Colossians 1:15.

**Christ is the firstborn of every creature.**

1. Those who deny the deity of Christ will try to make this to say that Christ was the first created being. This is not what the verse says, and that would contradict the next verse which states that Christ created **all** things. cf. John 1:3
2. The term “*firstborn*” has to do with Christ entering this world and taking on humanity.
3. In the Bible, the “*firstborn*” was the one who had preeminence and was the rightful heir.

- But, it didn't always mean first in time. For example, Solomon was not David's firstborn son chronologically, yet he was declared to be the firstborn (Psalm 89:27) in that he was the preeminent son and rightful heir to David's throne.
  - This demonstrates that the term "*firstborn*" does not refer to time, but to place or status. It literally means "of first importance; of first rank."
4. There were thousands of people born into this world before Christ was born, but like Esau was rejected as the firstborn (and Jacob was given preeminence), those born of Adam into this world were rejected. They were all marred by sin.
    - When the Father said, "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,*" what day was this referring to? The day that the Firstbegotten entered into the world. Hebrews 1:5-6
  5. Jesus became the first man to ever be born into this world of God's Spirit. When Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, He was the firstbegotten of the Father into this world. Until this time, nobody had ever been begotten of the Father.
  6. So, the terms "*firstborn,*" or "*firstbegotten*" in no way deny the eternity of Christ or His deity. They have to do with the eternal Son being born into this world, and having first place and preeminence over anybody else.  
John 1:1, 14, 18
  7. This is the context of Colossians 1:15-18. Notice the words "*before,*" "*head,*" "*preeminence.*" Christ is the physical manifestation of God (image), born into this world, and therefore He is the Head (firstborn) of all creation and preeminent in all things.

## Verse 16

1. This verse is crystal clear. Jesus was not a created god or created being. He was the One **doing** the creating! He created "*all things*" in heaven and in earth. He created everything that is visible to man and everything that is invisible to man.
2. There was no universe or earth until Jesus commanded it to be. He spoke and it was done. Every form of matter and life owes its origin and existence to God the Son.
  - If you look up in the sky at night and wonder why a star is located where it is, remember, it is because that is exactly where Jesus wanted it to be. Why does a tree have a certain type of leaf? It is because that is what Jesus decided.
3. When Paul speaks of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, he is referring to governmental positions of rank and authority in the heavenlies within the angelic host. These are the invisible things that Paul is talking about. Jesus created every one.
  - They were created "*by him, and for him.*" In other words, they were created to glorify Jesus Christ.
  - God created the heaven and the earth and established a governmental structure to rule and reign over it, and it was designed to glorify Jesus Christ. He would be the center of it all.

4. Of course, many of these positions of rank and authority followed Satan in his rebellion against God. Ephesians 6:11-12
  - It is not just the earth that has been polluted by sin. The heavens were polluted first through the fall of Satan and his angels.
5. God has a plan that will enable “*all things*” in heaven and earth (those positions of rank and authority) to be reconciled back to their creator, Jesus Christ. vs. 20
6. This is the overall theme of God's Word. You will hear some Bible teachers teach that the theme of God's Word is the redemption of mankind. This is not the main theme. It is a subplot to God's overall goal and theme.
7. The overall theme of the Bible is the authority of God's throne over the earth and the heavens. It is all about God reconciling the things in heaven and earth so that the things that He created will manifest the glory of Jesus Christ.  
Ephesians 1:9-10