

Lesson 8

The Preeminence *of* Christ**SABBATH AFTERNOON**

This week we will look at one of the most comprehensive and sublime statements about Jesus in the New Testament. What does it mean that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God,” yet also “the firstborn over all creation” (*Col. 1:15, NIV*)?

Memory Text: Colossians 1:15-17

“He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (*Colossians 1:15–17, NKJV*).

With this week’s lesson, we resume our consideration of Colossians (*see Lessons 1 and 2*). In Lesson 2, Thursday, we saw that in Colossians 1:9–12, Paul prays for believers in Colossae, asking that they may live in a way pleasing to God. In verses 12 and 13, he contrasts two realms: that of light and of darkness, “the kingdom of light” (*Col. 1:12, NIV*) and “the dominion of darkness” (*Col. 1:13, NIV*). God the Father has qualified us to share in the eternal inheritance of the realm of light, delivered us from the power of darkness, and “transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (*Col. 1:13, 14, ESV*).

In other words, it is in Jesus, the person of Jesus, who is also God our Creator, that we have redemption. He worked out our redemption for us, and by faith in Him we have been moved from the realm of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

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SUNDAY February 15 **Image of the Invisible God**

Colossians 1:15–17 ¹⁵He is the **image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶**For by Him all things were created** that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things were created through Him and for Him.** ¹⁷**And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

- Old Testament = book of promises
 - Every page pointing = forward to Deliverer
- **Genesis 3:15** God promised **Seed of the woman** = Crush serpent's [Satan's] head
 - From Garden of Eden/to prophet Malachi
 - story of Seed unfolds = narrative picks up in Gospels
 - Covenant grace = promised to Abraham / reaffirmed to Isaac/Jacob = Echoed thru David's Psalms / Isaiah's visions

Isaiah 9:6 "...His name shall be called **Wonderful Counselor/ Mighty God/ Everlasting Father / Prince of Peace**"

Micah 5:2 pinpoints place/birth: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah ... out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, **whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting**"

- Messiah/Christ = titles - "anointed One" = existed eternally = BEFORE **Bethlehem's cradle / Adam's first breath / time began**
- Messiah/Christ = Second Person of Godhead

John 1:1-3 In beginning was /Word = Word was w/ God, and the **Word was God... All things were made thru Him = and without Him nothing was made that was made**"

- **Colossians 1:16** For by Him all things were created
- Not some things = **ALL** things = visible / invisible
 - **From** vast galaxies /to/ microscopic cells
- **Creator** of Genesis = **Messiah** of OT = **Christ** of Gospels

- Christ is/Creator Revealed = Creator is not Himself “created”

John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh / dwelt among us.”

- **DWELT** = “tabernacled” = as God’s presence once filled wilderness sanctuary = His glory now filled human flesh / Person of Jesus Christ

John 8:58 “Assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

- Declared Himself to be Yahweh = Eternal / self-existent “I AM” who spoke to Moses /burning bush **Ex 3:14** “**I AM that I AM**”

Colossians 2:9 in Him dwells all the fullness of / Godhead bodily;

Matthew 1:21 Angel told Mary, “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins”

- Creator = walked among His creation
 - Reveal His nature / LOVE = righteous character / LIGHT
 - Became Redeemer/ Rescue His fallen image-bearers
 - Very One who said = “Let there be light”
 - Entered world darkened by sin / to bring light of salvation
- **Invisible God /became visible = eternal God stepped into time**
 - **2nd Person of Godhead = became Person of Jesus Christ**
 - **Son of Man = Covenant SON OF GOD**

Hebrews 1:2–3 ²[God] has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, thru whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of His glory and the **express image** of His person

- Jesus does not merely reflect God’s glory = He **radiates** glory of God / because He is GOD = “express image of His person”
- Exact representation of God / shares God’s divine nature
- Not only created all things = vs 3 cont:
 - upholding all things by the word of His power = Sustainer

Philippians 2:6–8 being in the form of God / equal w/ God = took on flesh ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to / point of death = even / death of the cross.

- He is not merely **like** God = He **is** God
- **John 10:30** I and my Father are one
- Our Creator / became Redeemer = Lawgiver / became Lamb
 - Almighty / became = Servant for our salvation
- When Father introduced His Son to heavenly host = declared,
- **Hebrews 1:6** “Let all the angels of God worship Him”
 - The Creator = worthy of / worship of His creation
- Greatest mystery of all time Hands that fashioned / stars
 - Were pierced by nails of iron
- Lord of Glory humbled Himself = to / shame of / cross
 - to redeem = creatures He loved
- If Jesus were / mere messenger = Cross would show **sympathy**
- But because Jesus is / Creator = Cross shows /very **heart of God**
 - Self-sacrificing love / beyond comprehension
- Creator bore / curse of His own creation
 - To bring us back into covenant w/ Himself

2 Cor 5:19 “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself”

Revelation 4:11 sings = “Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created”

- Creator’s worthiness = sealed by / cross = became His crown
- Creation and redemption = are forever joined

LESSER REPRESENTATIVES / biblical concept “image” = GK eikon

Genesis 1:26, 27 Let us make man in our image

Genesis 5:3 Seth, made in image of Adam

Hebrews 10:1 Law shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things

- Same power that spoke worlds into existence
 - Now works to re-create = image of God within us

2 Corinthians 3:18 We all, w/ unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror / glory of Lord, are being transformed into the same image

- Creation / redemption have = same goal
 - Creatures reflect = God's character of love
 - As we behold Jesus = invisible God becomes visible in us
 - When Christ returns = **1 John 3:2** "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"

NEXT WEEK: RECONCILIATION AND HOPE