

## Message Notes

Jesus: the firstborn over all creation

## Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

**Introduction** - happy endings

*Rooted in Christ ~*

*A study of Colossians*

Today's Message:

Jesus: the firstborn over all creation  
Colossians 1:15-17

The Supremacy of Jesus - The importance of the next six verses cannot be overstated!

"The Son is the image of the invisible God."

Colossians 1:15a, Genesis 1:26-28

"The Son is the firstborn over all creation."

Colossians 1:15b, Psalm 89:27

Was Jesus created?

"For in him all things were created."

Colossians 1:16a

The concept of borrowed power

"All things have been created through him."

Colossians 1:16b

"All things have been created for him."

Colossians 1:16b

"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Colossians 1:17

Pas = all, every, each

**Gospel Application** - God's guarantee of a happy ending

**Colossians 1:15-20**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**Genesis 1:26-28**

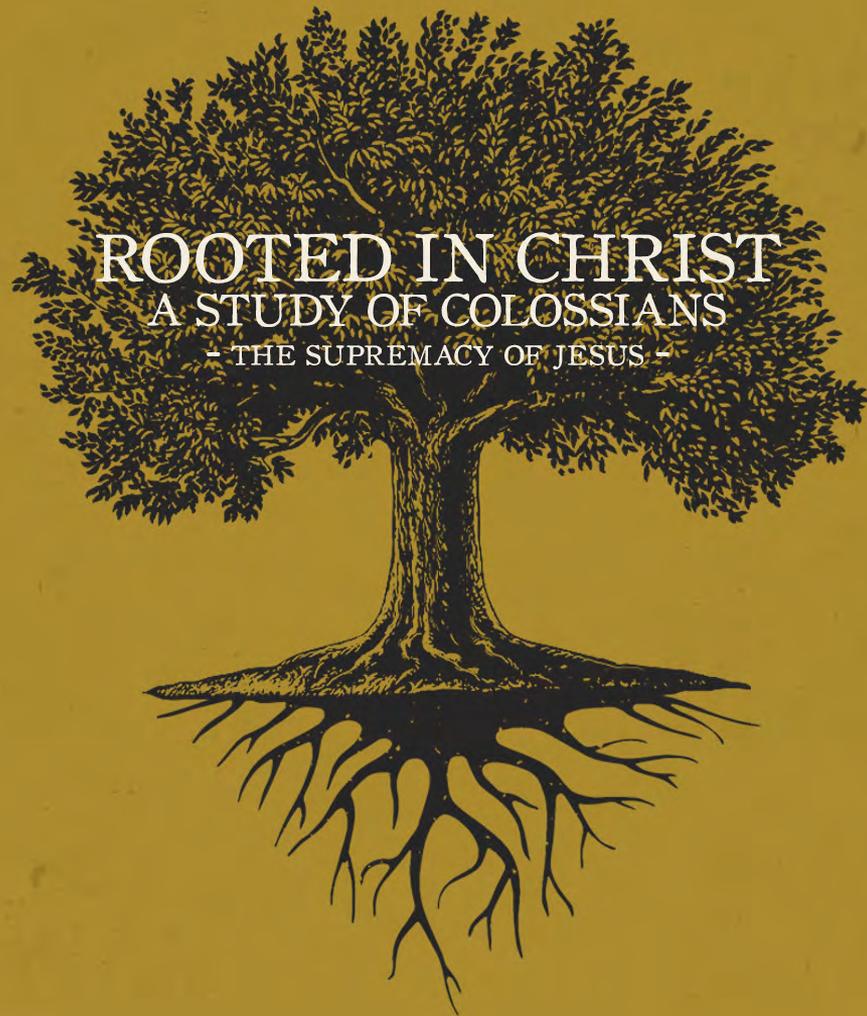
Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

**Psalm 89:27**

And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.

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ROOTED IN CHRIST  
A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS  
- THE SUPREMACY OF JESUS -

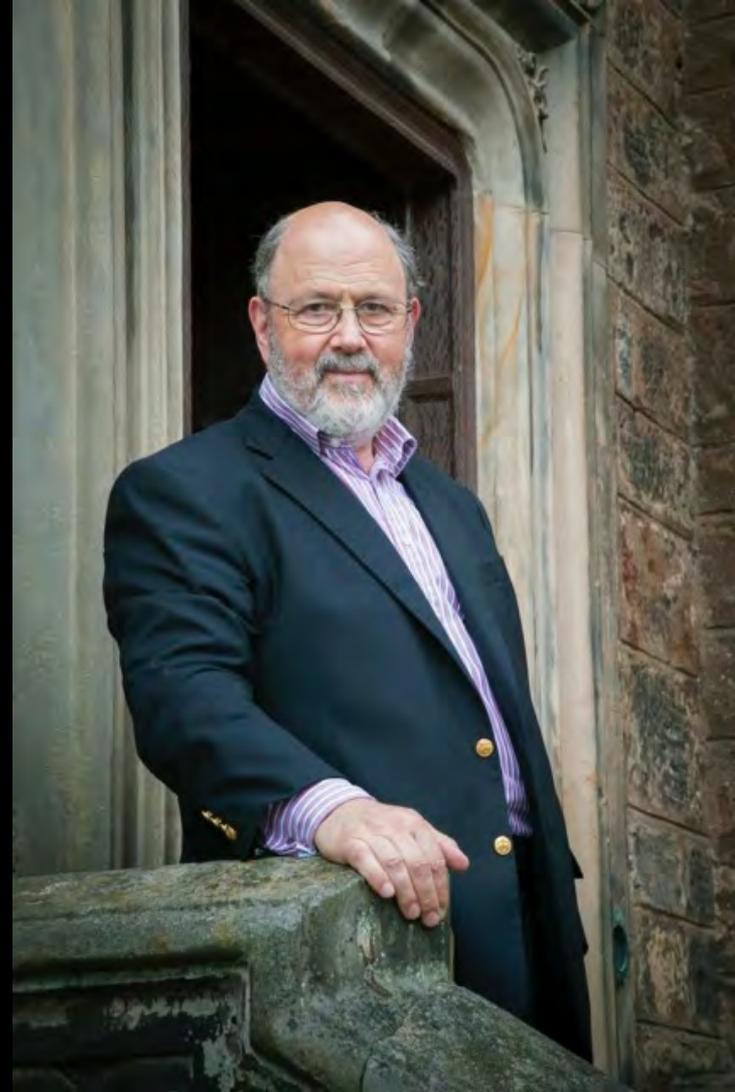
This passage, the most famous in the letter, is one of the christological high points of the New Testament and provides a critical basis for the teaching of the letter.

Moo, D. J. (2008). The letters to the Colossians and to Philemon (p. 107). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.



The next six verses of the letter are generally, and rightly, reckoned among the most important Christological passages in the New Testament.

Wright, N. T. (1986). *Colossians and Philemon: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 12, p. 67). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



## Colossians 1:15-20

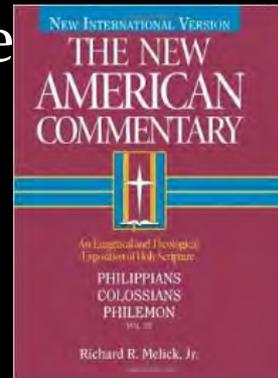
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## Colossians 1:15-17

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The hymn to Christ has two uneven stanzas, but their themes are consistent. The first relates Jesus to creation; the second, to redemption. The first considers the created world, including the material creation and supernatural beings. The second considers the reconciliation of these various created elements which have gone astray. Therefore, Paul contributed to the two main themes of the Bible: creation and redemption. Together, the two stanzas make a strong case for the supremacy of Christ. He is Lord over creation, and he Lord of the new creation.

Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 214). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



# The Supremacy of Jesus

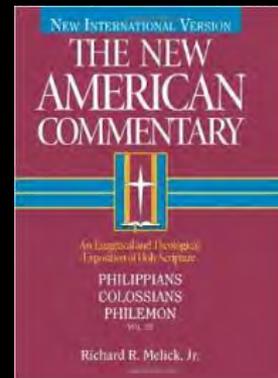
**He is the image of the invisible God**

**Colossians 1:15a**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

In the Greek world, the word “image” (eikōn) conveyed one of two nuances of meaning. Both elements were always present, but one tended to dominate the other. The first is that of representation. The image represented and symbolized what the object pictured. This usage occurred often in the contexts of an image on a coin or a reflection in a mirror. If this emphasis were primary, Paul would have said Jesus was the symbol of deity. Paul would have meant that Jesus exactly symbolized God. The second element of meaning in the word “image” (eikōn) was manifestation. When the term was employed, it meant that the symbol was more than a symbol. The symbol brought with it the actual presence of the object.

Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 214). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



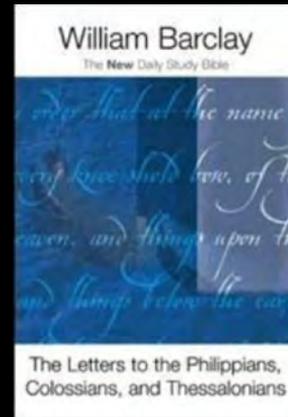
# The Supremacy of Jesus

## Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image (eikōn), in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created human beings in his own image (eikōn), in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

By using this word of Jesus, Paul in effect says: 'Look at this Jesus. He shows you not only what God is; he also shows you what you were meant to be. Here is humanity as God designed it. Jesus is the perfect manifestation of God and the perfect manifestation of what it is to be human.' There is in Jesus Christ the revelation of godhead and the revelation of true humanity.

Barclay, W. (2003). *The Letters to Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, pp. 136–137). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.



# The Supremacy of Jesus

Jesus makes the invisible God *visible*

John 1:14, 18

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth...18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and f is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

# The Supremacy of Jesus

**Jesus makes the invisible God *visible***

**1 John 1:1-4**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

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# The Supremacy of Jesus

If we've seen and know Jesus,  
we will look and act differently!

## 1 John 4:19-21

19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

# The Supremacy of Jesus

**He is the firstborn over all creation**

**Colossians 1:15b**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

# The Supremacy of Jesus

**He is the firstborn over all creation**

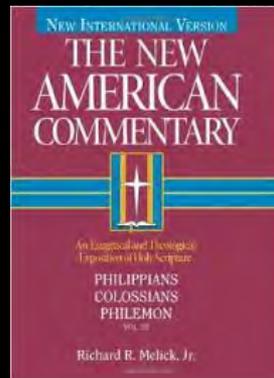
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**Was Jesus created?**

In the fourth century, Arius, a preacher from Alexandria, Egypt, taught that Christ was a created being. He was greater than the rest of the creation but lesser than God himself. Arius hoped this position would protect Christianity from the charge of polytheism.

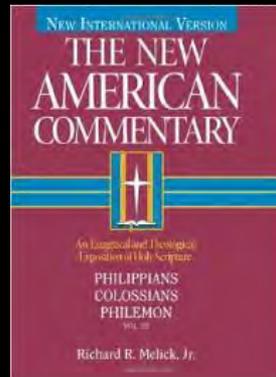
Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 215). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



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This position was condemned in the church in a.d. 325.

Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 215). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



We believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made;  
of the same essence as the Father.  
Through him all things were made.

# The Supremacy of Jesus

**When firstborn doesn't mean born first!**

**Exodus 4:22**

22 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me."

# The Supremacy of Jesus

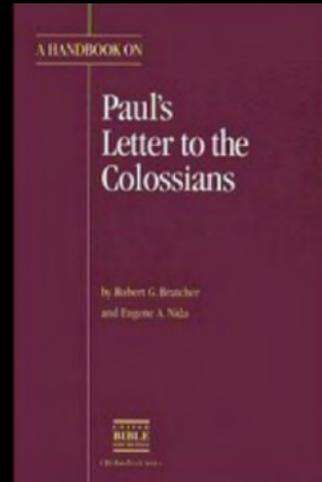
**When firstborn doesn't mean born first!**

**Psalm 89:27**

27 And I will appoint him to be my firstborn,  
the most exalted of the kings of the earth.

It seems far better to use some such expression as “God’s first Son” and to explain the concept of being “first” in the terms of having “existed before anything else was created.” The superiority of Christ to all creation can sometimes be expressed as “he is more important than all that was created” or “he ranks higher than all created things.”

Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993). A handbook on Paul’s letters to the Colossians and to Philemon (p. 23). New York: United Bible Societies.



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# The Supremacy of Jesus

**For in him all things were created**

**Colossians 1:16a**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

We should not ignore the supernatural or 'demonic' element in these 'powers'. Anything to which human beings offer the allegiance proper only to God is capable of assuming, and exerting, a sinister borrowed power.

Wright, N. T. (1986). *Colossians and Philemon: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 12, p. 76-77). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



# The Supremacy of Jesus

**All things have been created through him**

**Colossians 1:16b**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

# The Supremacy of Jesus

**All things have been created for him**

**Colossians 1:16c**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

“For those who have been redeemed by Christ, the universe has no ultimate terrors; they know that their Redeemer is also creator, ruler, and goal of all.”

Bruce, F.F. (1984). *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.



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# The Supremacy of Jesus

He is...

**Colossians 1:17**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

The word pas (variously translated “all,” “every,” “each”), occurring eight times in these verses, is the thread that binds the verses together.

Moo, D. J. (2008). The letters to the Colossians and to Philemon (p. 111). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.



# The Supremacy of Jesus

**He is...over ALL**

**Colossians 1:17**

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

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# Gospel Application