

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

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FIRSTBORN: WAS CHRIST BORN BEFORE ANYONE ELSE?

We read in Col. 1:15-16, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the **Firstborn** of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him".

Does this passage tell us that Christ was born before any one or any thing else? If it does, would that mean that there was a time before Christ was born that He didn't exist? I believe that Jesus Christ is both Jehovah as spirit, and Jehovah manifest. (Please see the paper on this website [Jesus Christ Is Both Jehovah And The Manifestation Of Jehovah](#) for the Scriptural evidence of that statement.) In other words, **Christ is eternal, there was never a time when He did not exist.**

Before we embark on a study of Col. 1:15 we will need to understand all the nuances of the word "firstborn". What does it mean to be the "firstborn"? The answer to that question lies in the context of each time the word "firstborn" is used. We will examine those passages.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE THE FIRSTBORN?

In one sense the answer to the question posed in the heading of this section is quite obvious because it is clear that the term means to be the one that is born first in a family. But to be born first in a family, especially in Biblical times, has great significance.

We read in Gen. 27 of Jacob's deception when he made his father Isaac think he was Esau in order to gain for himself the blessings of his firstborn brother. We read in verses 26-29, "And his father Isaac said unto him" (Jacob, pretending to be Esau) 'Come near now, and kiss me, my son.' And he came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: **be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee....**". This blessing was given to one who Isaac thought was Esau, and it was given solely **because Esau was the firstborn.**

We read in Numbers 3:13, "...all the firstborn are Mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I **hallowed unto Me all the firstborn in Israel**, both man and beast; Mine shall they be....". This would explain why the firstborn son is the preeminent son in a Hebrew family.

"FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD"

One might ask: if Christ was not born first, i.e. before any one else, why is He called the "Firstborn? For the answer to that question we will turn to Ps. 2: 7 which reads, "I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto Me, 'Thou art My Son; **This day have I begotten Thee**". To what "day" does the phrase "this day" refer? The note in the Companion Bible suggests that it is at His **resurrection** that Christ was begotten. Let us examine that thought.

We read in Acts 13:32-33, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath **raised up Jesus** again; as it is also written in the second psalm, 'Thou are My Son, **this day have I begotten Thee**'" Here Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that the promise of Psalm two that God's Son would be **begotten** is fulfilled at Christ's **resurrection.**

Col. 1:18 which also speaks of Christ as the Firstborn confirms that Christ was "begotten" at His resurrection. "And He is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the **Firstborn from the dead**; that in all things He might have the **preeminence**". This verse uses the phrase "Firstborn from the dead" which is, of course, an obvious reference to Christ's resurrection. And it also tells us that **His position as the Firstborn from the dead gives Him the preeminence in all things.**

"FIRSTBORN" IN ROMANS 8:29

We have seen that the every firstborn son has a preeminent position in the family. He is "hallowed" unto God, and he is due a greater blessings than all his siblings. Romans 8:29

gives us a wonderful example of the preeminent position given to Christ as the Firstborn. Rom. 8:28-29 reads, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the **firstborn** among many brethren".

This passage speaks of Christ being the firstborn among many. Does it speak of the order in relation to His brethren in which Christ was actually born? No, I do not believe that is what this passage is about. We are told quite specifically that whom God called He made them to be conformed to the "image of His Son" "**that**" Christ might be the Firstborn. The fact of some being made conformable to His image has nothing to do with when in relation to others Christ was born. It has to do with Christ's **position of preeminence because He was the firstborn from the dead**. My point is that this passage in Romans 8 uses the word "firstborn" to indicate Christ's preeminence, not the order in which He was born or even the order in which He was raised from the dead..

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17

I believe that we are now ready to look at Col. 1:15-17 which reads, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominion, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist".

We have seen that the term "firstborn" can refer to the order in which one was born and it could also refer to the preeminence of that person. To which does it refer in the passage in Col. 1? Let us take our answer from the immediate context. Verse 18b makes the point of this entire passage, "**that in all things He might have the preeminence**". In short, this passage is not about "firstborn" in relation to anyone's or anything's birth. **It is about Christ's position of "preeminence"**.

If we understand this passage to say that Christ was born before any one or any thing else we must ask if there was a time when Christ did not exist, i.e. a time before His birth? But Christ is God, God is eternal, there never was a time when He did not exist.

In short, to say that Col. 1:15 tells us that Christ was "born" first, i.e. before any thing or any one else was created implies that He did not exist before He was born. As mentioned above, I believe that Christ is both Jehovah and Jehovah manifest. As Jehovah, Who is spirit, Christ has always existed. Therefore, I believe that Col. 1:15 tells us that Christ is preeminent in all things created.

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