

1.

Body

1.

Jesus is Lord over all Creation 15-16

1.

First in vv. 15-16, Paul tells us that **Jesus is Lord over all creation.**

1.

Colossians 1:15-16 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him.

2.

Divinity & Priority over all creation 15

1.

“Image of the invisible God” - Divinity 15a

-

In v. 15 Paul tells us two things—1) Christ is the “**image of the invisible God**,” and
2) Christ is “

the firstborn over all creation.

” Christ’s being “

the image of the invisible God

” emphasizes His

full divinity

; His being the “

firstborn over all creation

” emphasizes His

priority over all creation

.

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This word “**image**” is the word “icon” in Greek. We might think an “**image**” is empty of real substance, like the way a paper photograph does not actually *contain* the objects of which it is a picture. But this word “icon” has a different meaning in this passage. It doesn’t mean Christ is an *empty*

picture of God, but rather that He is *full* of the being of God.

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Example: I have in my hand a small piece of stone that came from a church which sent bishops to the Council of Nicea. It’s a piece of a carving in the ruins

of a church building in Susita (aka Hippos) in Galilee.

[1](#)

The church building was toppled by an earthquake in the 600's, right before the controversy over iconoclasm. The reason this is such a small piece of stone is that "iconoclasts"—which means icon-breakers—came with hammers and beat the church of Susita's religious decorations—its "icons"—to bits.

You see, the Greek churches from the 300's to the Eastern Orthodox churches of the present day, believe that we should venerate pictures of Christ, pictures of saints, because those pictures connect us to Christ, to those saints, and thereby to God, because Christ, the saints, and God are present through their representation in those pictures. Through those "icons." The iconoclasts, remembering the Second Commandment: “

Thou shalt not make any graven image

,” rejected the worship of icons, and beat them to bits.

[2](#)

The Eastern Orthodox claim from this verse that because Christ is the “*icon*

” of God, it is right to make “icons” of God.

[3](#)

The iconoclasts, and the Reformers after them, claimed from this passage that because

Christ

is the “icon” of God, we should not look for any other representation of Him than those representations which God has appointed in His word—which are especially the image of God in man, and the sacraments. For Christ Himself is the fully sufficient revelation of all of who God is, for Christ is Himself fully and truly God.

-

Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,

-

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

-

John **14:9** **Whoever has seen me has**
seen **the Father.**

-

Nicene **Creed**

-

“God of God, Light of Light, very
God of very God; begotten, not
made, being of one substance with the
Father, by whom all things were
made.”

-

Christ is the “icon” of God. We don’t need to look to a carving, to a stone, to see God. We need to look to Christ.

-

This stone gives us a *physical* connection with a distant place and a distant time, an *historical* connection with the saints of the ancient church, but *not* a *spiritual* connection with God’s grace which

is to be found
in Christ alone
!

-

Christ presents the fullness of God to
us, because He is in fact fully God.

-

“Firstborn over all creation” -

Priority over all creation 15b

-

Because Christ is fully God He has the right of ownership over all creation, like a firstborn son in the OT had the right to inherit his father's wealth. And so in **v. 15b** Christ is called the “**firstborn over all creation.**”

” This shows that He has a divine **priority over all creation**

. He is greater than all creation, more deserving of praise, of reverence, of worship, than all created things.

-

In fact, He owns you, and He owns me. Therefore He has a *right* to receive our worship. He is the “
firstborn over all creation.”

-

Because He created all things
16

1.

Christ's divinity and priority are expressed in and demonstrated by the fact that He created all things. We see this in **v. 16**.

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Colossians 1:16 “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through

him and for him.

”

-

**Comprehensive *Extent* of
Christ’s Lordship over
Creation – “all things”**

-

**In every (metaphysical)
realm - “in heaven and on**

earth”

-

**Under every
(epistemological) aspect -
“visible and invisible”**

-

**Over every (ethical) power -
“whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities”**

-

Spiritual powers, highest angelic or demonic forces, greatest earthly kings or nations—all were created by Christ. “Every knee will bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

-

We see then that Christ is Lord in every area of being,

thought, and activity.

-

Abraham Kuyper - “There is not one square inch of God’s creation over which Jesus Christ does not declare, ‘It is mine!’”

-

Covenantal *Endpoints* of Christ's Lordship – Origin & Goal

-

“By Him”

-

All things come from Him.
There is nothing you can see

around you, nothing you
own, which did not come from
Christ its Creator.

-

“For Him”

-

And so who are you not to
use these things **for Him**, in

service to Him?! Who are you
to claim that your
property

is completely for you to
do with as you please

?! Who are you to claim
that you are the
creator

, the
origin
and

goal
of the things around you?!
Who are you to take such a
high view of

money

, to put your trust in the

worldly knowledge

you have amassed, to claim
you grasp the

basic principles

of the world?! Who are you

to claim you are

Lord of your life

?

!

-

I have news for you. I tell you the truth, you are not your own, but ***Jesus Christ is Lord***. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

-

Conclusion: Jesus is Lord of Creation, and Lord of Salvation 17-18a

1.

This is the conclusion Paul is driving us to in this whole passage. ***Jesus Christ is Lord***. He is the Master, the Owner, the Ruler, of all things. He is the Lord of

the universe, and Lord of the church.

2.

Paul summarizes this conclusion in the central two verses of this passage, which both begin with the words “**and He is.**

”

3.

Lord of Creation 17

1.

**Transcendent eternal
preexistence - “before all
things” 17a**

-

Christ is “before all things.”

This means He has a
transcendent, eternal

preexistence.

-

Arius misunderstood this verse when he argued that “there once was a time when [Christ] was not.”

Arius took passages like the above, “**he is the firstborn over all creation,**” and

Prov. 8:22

— “

God created me at the
beginning of His work,

”

4

to teach that Christ was
the first creature, and did not
exist eternally before
creation.

—

Hilary of Poitiers in
his book titled
On the Trinity

, or
De Trinitate

,
[5](#)

demonstrated that
Scripture
does

teach Christ's eternal
preexistence and divine
nature.

-

I AM. This is what Christ told the Jews when He claimed the divine name YHWH, which means “**I AM**,” and which we translate “Lord,” in **John 8:58** - “

before Abraham was, I
AM.

”

-

Christ is in fact the
true, eternal, supremely
exalted *God* of the
OT and the New, even
from all eternity past

■

-

**Immanent
sustaining providence
- “in Him all things
hold together” 17b**

-

“In [Christ] all things hold together.” This means there is nothing that is not held together in its existence by the **immanent sustaining providence** of Christ. He holds all

things in His hand.

-

Lord of Salvation
18a

1.

Because of Christ's preeminence over all creation, as its Creator and Sustainer, He alone can have the position of complete preeminence in our salvation. No one else

can save us as He can.

Only God, only the
Creator, only the
Sustainer, can save His
fallen creation. So
just as Christ is Lord of
Creation, so He is **Lord
of Salvation**

. He is Lord of the
first creation, and of the
new creation. Lord

of Heaven and Earth,
and Lord of the Church.

2.

Paul summarizes
this point in **v. 18a**

“

;

He is the head of the
body, the church.

” He elaborates it in what follows. Vv. 18b-20 are the second main section of this passage, which is evident in the Greek because 18b begins with the same phrase with which 15 began: “

He is

”

▪

3.

**Lord of Salvation
18b-20**

1.

Production of Reconciliation 18b

1.

Foundation/Fountain head – Beginning

-

In v. 18b, we see
that **Christ is**
Lord of the
production
of our salvation
, from its
beginning
to its

end

▪

—

He is its *beginning*.
In His Person, His
divine and human
natures, He is the
source, the

foundation, the
fountainhead of our
salvation.

-

Firstborn – End

-

He is the *end* of the production of our salvation. His resurrection fully accomplished His victory over our sin and its consequence of death. He is

already completely
victorious; there is no
more battle yet for
Him to win in regard to
producing our
salvation, because
He has risen from the
dead. This is what it
means that Christ
is the “
firstborn from the

dead.

” We in our old hearts were dead in our sins, and our bodies will die. But because He has risen, He is fully able to raise our hearts to new life, and we await the certain hope of Him raising our bodies

from the dead when
He comes at the end
of the age.

-

So Christ tells us
in **Revelation**
1:17-18 “Fea

r not, I am the first
and the last, 18 and
the living one. I died,
and behold I am
alive forevermore,
and I have the keys of
Death and Hades.

”

-

Product of Reconciliation 19-20

1.

**Fullness –
Beginning**

–

In vv. 19-20, we
see that **Chris**

t is Lord over the
product
of our salvation
, also from its
beginning
to its
end

▪

—

The product of
our salvation
begins
in Christ in Himself,
who is all the
fullness of God. All
the incommunicable
attributes of

God—His
eternality,
omniscience,
omnipotence—are
what we need to
sustain us in our
salvation, and all of
His communicable
attributes—His
knowledge,

righteousness, and holiness—are the core of the benefits we receive from Him in salvation. John tells us that “
from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” (

John 1:16

)

-

And so also Paul
tells us in **Colossia**
ns 2:9-10,
“

9 For in him the
whole fullness of
deity dwells bodily,
10 and you have
been filled in him,
who is the head of
all rule and
authority.

”

—

Reconciliation —

End

—

The product of
our salvation *ends*

through the finished
work of Christ's
reconciliation—it
is through Him that

God is reconciling
all things to
Himself, by
making peace
through the blood
of His cross,
whether those
things are in
heaven or on earth.

-

You see, God is in heaven, and you are on earth. You have sinned against God, and deserve His wrath,

deserve the pains
of Hell forever.
You have no
means of
reconciling yourself
to God, because
apart from what He
did in Christ you
are guilty, period.

But in Christ is all
you need to be
reconciled to
God—He died
to take the
punishment for
your sins, and God
promises to cover
your guilty record

with Christ's
righteous record, if
you believe on
Christ as the Lord
of your salvation.

-

Conclusion

1.

And so I must ask
you today, do you
recognize that
Christ is Lord of
all creation? He is.
Do you recognize

that He alone is
Lord of salvation
as well? I tell you
that “there is
salvation in no one
else, for there is no
other name under
heaven by which
we must be saved

” (

Acts 4:12

)

2.

My friend who
drives the tow

truck believes he
can save himself
by making sure
his adult children
are financially set
for life, and then
by taking his own
life when he
determines it is the

time for him to
die. He trusts in
his wealth, and in
himself as lord.

3.

Jesus Christ,

Lord of heaven
and earth, and
the Lord of
salvation, has an
answer for any
who trust in their
own wealth to
save their soul:

1.

“You fool! You don’t know whether this very night your life will be demanded of you.”

2.

“What does it
profit a man to
gain the world,
and lose his soul?
”

3.

Don't be fooled
by the philosophy
and empty

deception of this
world, but look
to Christ. Exalt
Him in your
hearts above all
else, for He is
Lord of all
creation, and

Lord of our salvation.

4.

Let us exalt Him, and give

Him the praise
that is due His
name, for “God
has highly
exalted him and
bestowed on
him the name
that is above

every name, 10
so that at the
name of Jesus
every knee
should bow, in
heaven and on
earth and under
the earth, 11

and every tongue
confess that
Jesus Christ is
Lord, to the
glory of God the
Father.

” (

Philippians

2:9-11

)

1 The church's columns are still there, and a marketplace connected to the church remains visible.

2The iconoclasm controversy went from 726-843 AD.

3The Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in Nicea, 787, proclaimed: “We define that the holy icons, whether in color,

mosaic, or some
other material,
should be
exhibited in the
holy churches of
God, on the
sacred vessels
and liturgical

vestments, on the
walls, furnishings,
and in houses
and along the
roads, namely the
icons of our Lord
God and Savior
Jesus Christ, that

of our Lady the
Theotokos, those
of the venerable
angels and those
of all saintly
people.

Whenever these
representations

are
contemplated,
they will cause
those who look at
them to
commemorate
and love their
prototype. We

define also that
they should be
kissed and that
they are an object
of veneration and
honor (timitiki
proskynisis), but
not of real

worship (latreia),
which is reserved
for Him Who is
the subject of our
faith and is
proper, for the
divine nature,
rendered τυπῆς

icon, is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands.”

4LXX: e;ktise,n
(ektisen)

“created me” (as
the first creature);

MT:

ynln"q'

(qanani)
“possessed me”
(as an instrument
by which to
create all
creatures.) Arius
& Hilary
regrettably both

worked off the
LXX, not the MT.

5Or perhaps
more true to
Hilary's intent, D

e Fide or On the Faith

■