

The Ultimate Source

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by [in] 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 [through] Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:15-17).

Christ is the Fashioner of the universe, as the expression of the Eternal Godhead. He is that part of the Eternal Spirit that entered into a process involving material substance. God emerged from the Spirit realm to produce the universe in the person of Christ. The magnitude of this concept requires some further detail and so we continue an exposition of Colossians 1:15-17.

The image of the invisible God . . . The invisible God is of course the Eternal Spirit. As such, He was not involved with a material universe. Christ was the expression of that Eternal Spirit with attributes that enabled Him to interact with material substance and to fashion from it the universe that we now have. Paul tells the Philippians that Christ was *“in the form of God”* (2:6). In Romans 8, Paul identifies the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as one and the same (8:9). Many passages in the New Testament make it abundantly clear that Christ was more than just **like** the Father, but one in **essence with** the Father. The controversy over this issue was settled at the council of Nicea in 325 a.d. From this time on, the mainstream of Christendom has accepted the fact that Christ was more than just “like” the Father, but was “one in essence with the Father.” He was far more than a material emanation from God (as per the Gnostics, with whom Paul dealt in Colossians), but was of the same substance and merely projected Himself in a visible or material form in the process of the creation and development of the human race.

The sacrifice that Christ made in the person of Jesus, was more than merely a recovery of the cosmos, but was a highly personalized restoration of His erring human creatures. His intent was to lift them to a place of identification with Himself and with the eternal Godhead.

The first emerging of all creation . . . In the last Messenger (q.v.), we made a special point of the fact that the word commonly translated “first begotten” or “firstborn”—*πρωτοτοκος* (*prototokos*)—can refer either to physical birth or merely to emerging, as in making an appearance. The misuse of this term has led to many misconceptions about the Deity of Christ. A number of groups that call themselves Christian have insisted on the humanity of Jesus to the sacrifice of His Deity.

Further, the expression “first emerging,” suggests that there are more elements that were to emerge from God. That is of course quite true in that through Christ the entire material universe came into being. The expression “firstborn,” has a problem with who would be the subsequent births? The concepts of spiritual births would not adequately handle the problem.

In Him were all things created . . . What is the significance of “in”? Some translations use “by,” but the Greek grammatical structure does not really

allow that. The Greek preposition εν (*en*) can be translated “by,” only when it refers to means by which. When the “by,” refers to a person, the Greek preposition would be ὑπο (*hupo*) with the genitive case. So, given the grammatical construction, “*en*” with the dative means “in.” So in what sense were all things created in Christ? Christ as the Emergent expression of God encompasses all things. It was only the incarnate form of Jesus that was confined within the universe. However, the Spirit of Christ within Jesus was not so confined either then or at the beginning of creation. It may seem like a fine point, but it is important to recognize that Christ was an equal part of the Godhead in the process of creation and is not properly seen as simply a “Craftsman,” doing His handiwork. The entire universe evolved out of the energy of Christ—the Light of the world and the Life of the world.

Things visible and visible—There is not a molecule in heaven or upon earth that does not find its origin in Christ.

Whether thrones or lordships or rulerships or authorities . . . Among the things invisible would be the hosts of Satan whose demonic spirits govern this world. These words which are usually taken to mean earthly kingdoms and rulerships, could not be in view here, especially since it cannot be said that Christ established all of these earthly monarchies and kingdoms through the ages. However, Paul makes a specific reference to these various authorities of the spirit world in (Ephesians 6:12)—“*For our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against rulers, against authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies*” (Author’s translation). Immediately these powers are identified as spiritual. The Greek word επιουρανιος (*epiouranios*) is incorrectly translated simply by “high places.” Such a translation was based upon the assumption that these authorities and powers were within the Church. It was assumed that there cannot be any such powers in heaven. However, the text does not say “heaven,” as we may know our ultimate dwelling place. Rather it refers to the spirit realm that is beyond any material heaven or earth. The clear teaching of the Scripture is that we are continually surrounded by demonic forces that are under the control of Satan. Many of these demon emissaries could be said to have possessed earthly monarchs down through the history of the world (of which there are still many) and brought about much evil and destruction upon the earth through them. Such rulers, who have been responsible for limitless mayhem and madness, seem to be beyond the usual human process of evil and avarice.

Of course now the big question is, was Christ responsible for the unleashing of these demons? The answer is that while He was responsible for the creation of all forms of life, spiritual and material, the element of free will was a prominent part of the duplication of the image of God. However, there was also the calculated risk that such ones might indeed rebel and go their own way. This of course is what Satan did, and was followed by a host of cohorts who became the demonic presences in the spirit realm. Those who remained true to God are those spirits whom we call angels—the “good spirits.” They are the ones whom Hebrews says are “*Ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shalt be the heirs of salvation*” (Hebrews 1:14). Thus, while Satan has a vast amount of power within a certain sphere, Christ has the ultimate power and His “ministering spirits” do continually protect us and guard against the inroads of the demonic realm. If it were not for His preserving power, we would be swallowed up in this world by our arch enemy. Occasionally God allows humans

to experience the destructive force of Satan, but always within limits and always for a particular purpose. Ultimately all of these Satanic forces will be vanquished and made a “*footstool for His feet*” (see I Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 2:5-8).

In Him all things stand together . . . The Greek word is συνιστημι (*sunistemi*)—“to stand together.” The English translation “consist,” really means the same thing. One is from Greek; the other from Latin. But both of them mean “to stand together.” What is the force that holds the atoms of the universe together? It is Christ. There is no visible source of adhesion, other than what we might call “magnetic force.” If you were to find a large enough magnification of atoms, you could see that there’s nothing in between them but space. The appearance of mass is but an illusion. The atoms are traveling at such a speed (about 186,000 miles per second), that we have the appearance of a solid surface. In a limited analogy, you have an electric fan which even in its low rate of speed gives the illusion of a solid surface (don’t touch it with your finger). Thus again we have the reality of things that the universe has been created “in Christ.”

And He is the Head of the body—the Church . . . If the Source of the energy of the universe is also the head of His body called the Church, can we not assume that the same energy of His Spirit flowing through us, will fulfill His purpose in us? To the Ephesians, Paul said that “*The energy with which God raised Christ from the dead has energized us*” (Ephesians 1:19) (Author’s translation). And to the Colossians he said “*In Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form, and you are fulfilled in Him*” (Colossians 2:9,10) (Author’s translation).

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