

Sunday, April 19, 2020—Colossians 1:15 Jesus Christ: The Image of the Invisible God & The Firstborn of Every Creature

- Welcome to the Grace Life Bible Church live stream.
 - Teaching directly to the saints of GLBC & others who want to join in.
 - Feel free to comment on the video but I will not be engaging with the audience in real time.
 - Focus on my notes and delivering the message.

- I would like to begin with some announcements.
 - Corona Comfort Playlist on the Church YouTube playlist.
 - Don't Passover Easter: A New Defense of Easter in Acts 12:4 was released by Dispensational Publishing House.
 - Fred Curtis is not doing well. Since visitors are not allowed and he does not hear his phone ring, cards would be most welcome. Send them to Fred Curtis, SKLD Healthcare, 2320 East Beltline SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546, Room 201.
 - Jeff De Wit's nephew has been diagnosed with the Coronavirus.
 - Pray for those in our church family that are out of work at this time or may have other needs.

- Things to keep in mind this week.
 - Tuesday @ 12:00 noon—I will be a guest on Ask the Theologian hosted by Randy White Ministries. If you want to watch on Facebook, search for Randy White. Be sure to look for Randy White from Taos First Baptist Church (there is more than one Randy White out there). If you want to watch on YouTube, search for Randy White Ministries.
 - Wednesday @ 7:00 pm—Live stream Pastor Bryan's Bible study on YouTube.

Friday @ 7:00 pm—Living the Transformed Life on Zoom. Des Strydom will be a guest speaker this week presenting a discussion about Romans 12. Anyone from the local assembly is invited. Be sure Bryan has your current email address by Friday noon if you want to join.
 - Offerings can be made on the church's website via PayPal by clicking on the Donate button under Support of Ministry. Checks can be mailed Daryl Doornbos our treasurer at his home. He can deposit them using technology without leaving his home.

- If you would like to make a donation to help folks from our church that may be in need, please send your donation to Daryl Doornbos at his address. Be sure to specify that it is for our One-Anothering fund.

Colossians 1:15

- **Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:**
- Starting here in verse 15 Paul is going to begin his great defense of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember from our introductory studies last Fall that some in the church at Colosse had embraced Gnosticism. A system of philosophical thought that sought to diminish Christ.
- **Who is the image of the invisible God**—it is important to note that the outset that that “who” that is being referred to in verse is the second person of the Godhead the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Colossians 1:13—“. . . his dear Son”
 - Colossians 1:14—“In whom. . .” i.e., “his dear Son” or the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God.” The English noun “image” carries the following relevant meanings, according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*:
 - “A representation or similitude of any person or thing, formed of a material substance; as an image wrought out of stone, wood or wax.”
 - Matthew 22:20
 - Mark 12:16
 - Luke 20:24
- John 1:18—“no man hath seen God [the Father] at any time” he is declared and manifest and by the Son i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God” because he was God in human flesh i.e., he is by definition the image of God. He is God in the flesh or God in the material substance of a human body.
 - John 1:1-3, 14
 - John 4:24
 - Philippians 2:4-8—Jesus Christ the only begotten of the Father is the image of God in human flesh.

- II Corinthians 4:4
- Colossians 1:15—the Lord Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God in that he “declared” and manifested the nature and character of God the Father.
 - John 10:30
 - John 14:9
- **the firstborn of every creature**—not only is Christ the “image of the invisible God” but He is also “the firstborn of every creature.” The adjective translated “firstborn” in verse 15 is important to properly understand. The word occurs 9 time in 9 verses in the Greek text supporting the King James Bible.
- Sometimes the word is used to refer to birth order.
 - Matthew 1:25
 - Luke 2:7
 - Hebrews 11:28
- Is this the sense that Jesus is “the firstborn or every creature?” Was he literally the first creature to be born? No! That would be heresy! The Lord Jesus Christ eternally existed as the second member of the God and was both present and active at creation.
 - Colossians 1:16-17
 - John 1:1-3
 - Micah 5:2—the child born in Bethlehem was from everlasting.
- Colossians 1:15—so I think we are safe concluding that Jesus Christ was not literally the first creature ever born. There is another sense/meaning of the word “firstborn” that we need to understand.
- Noah Websters American Dictionary of the English Language records two definitions for the word “firstborn.”
 - First brought forth; first in the order of nativity; eldest; as the first-born son.
 - Most excellent; most distinguished or exalted. Christ is called the first-born of every creature. Colossians 1:1.

- It in this second sense, “most excellent, most distinguished or exalted” that Christ is “the firstborn of every creature.”
- Colossians 1:18—Paul states that Christ is the “firstborn from the dead.” Does this mean that Jesus was first in time to be raised from the dead? No, we know that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.
 - John 11:43-44—but what ultimately happened to Lazarus? He died again.
 - Romans 6:9—Christ’s resurrection was superior to that of Lazarus because Christ didn’t die a second time but was rather exalted far above all principality and power in both this and the world to come (Eph. 1:20-21).
- Colossians 1:18—so Christ is the “firstborn from the dead” in the sense that his resurrection is “the most excellent, most distinguished or exalted.” Not only that but Christ’s resurrection also secures our resurrection.
- Colossians 1:15—the Lord Jesus Christ is both “the image of the invisible God” and “the firstborn of every creature.” Beware of those who would seek to use this verse to argue that God the Father produced the birth of Christ, and there Christ is a created being inferior to God, and therefore not part of the Godhead. All cults attack the integrity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Regarding Paul’s use of the term “firstborn” Ernest R. Campbell states the following in his commentary on Colossians:
 - “Paul’s use of the word “first-born” here emphasizes only the fact that Christ existed prior to the creation of the universe and all that is in it, and cannot be justifiably used to prove that He is a created being, which is the furthest thing from Paul’s mind in this context.” (Campbell, 43)

Practical Point to Ponder

- Romans 8:29—God desire was the we might be conformed to the image of his Son. For the purpose of making his Son the “firstborn among many brethren.”
- II Corinthians 4:10-11—Christ is desiring to live his life.
- Galatians 2:20
- Colossians 3:10—the world sees God the Father as the image of Christ is reflected in the members of the body of Christ. When we walk in the new man, we are the image of Christ to a lost and dying world.

Reminders

- Tuesday @ 12:00 noon—I will be a guest on Ask the Theologian hosted by Randy White Ministries. If you want to watch on Facebook, search for Randy White. Be sure to look for Randy White from Taos First Baptist Church (there is more than one Randy White out there). If you want to watch on YouTube, search for Randy White Ministries.
- Wednesday @ 7:00 pm—Live stream Pastor Bryan's Bible study on YouTube.
- Friday @ 7:00 pm—Living the Transformed Life on Zoom. Des Strydom will be a guest speaker this week presenting a discussion about Romans 12. Anyone from the local assembly is invited. Be sure Bryan has your current email address by Friday noon if you want to join.
- Offerings can be made on the church's website via PayPal by clicking on the Donate button under Support of Ministry. Checks can be mailed Daryl Doornbos our treasurer at his home. He can deposit them using technology without leaving his home.