

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Firstborn of All Creation

Everything in all creation comes from God the Father; all things come out of the midst of or out from God. This applies to the entire, both visible and invisible, universe as we know it. Some might question the use of the word *invisible*, as if to imply that this includes the spirit realm. Well, it does. His sphere includes the celestial or heavenly as well as the terrestrial spheres and every form of spiritual power. This is according to Paul, for he includes the spirit realm in the whole or all things. In addition, the universe is a vast place that is held together by particles that our eyes cannot see. Actually, there is more of the invisible in the universe than the visible.

Now, this raises the question of the place of God's Son in creation. Paul gives us the clearest answer in his Colossians epistle. The following is from *Jonathan Mitchell's New Testament*; a rather unique translation that attempts to include all possible ways to word Greek scripture.

Who is the Image (the Exact Formed Likeness; the Figure and Representation; visible likeness) of the not-seen God (the unable to be seen God; the invisible God), the Firstborn of all creation (or: of every creature; of every framing and founding; of every act of reducing from a state of disorder and wildness) [= the Inheritor of all creation; the One who will assume authority over every creature], because within Him was created (is founded and settled; is built and planted; is brought into being, produced and established) The Whole (all things) – the things within the heavens, and the things upon the earth (land); the visible things, and the unseen (unable to be seen; invisible) things: whether thrones or lordships (ownership systems) or governments (rulers; leadership systems; sovereignties) or authorities – The Whole (all things) has been created and continues founded and framed through means of Him, and [proceeds, or was placed] into Him (or: He is the agent and goal of all creation). (Colossians 1:15-16 JM-NT)

In speaking of the Son of God's love, the visible image of the invisible or unseen God, Paul declares that the Son is the firstborn of all creation. According to Strong's *Concordance*, the word *firstborn* is made up of two words: *protos*, which means "foremost (in time, place, order, or importance)," and *tikto*, which means "to produce (from seed, as a mother); literally or figuratively, to bear, be born, bring forth." Notice how the definition refers to a mother, for she is the one who gives birth, not the father. This implies the motherhood of God. But, once born, the relationship becomes one of Father and Son.

But, what does this mean? Was the Son of God born out of God? Why not? This is what scripture says. The Son is the firstborn of all creation, meaning He was the first to come forth from or out of the midst of God the Father. Some might be disturbed by such a thought, for doesn't this imply He is not God? No, it does not. Actually, it proves that He is God, for He came out of the seed of God as the very image of His Father. When I came forth out of my mother's womb, I was of the same substance as my mother and father. I wasn't born as a tree but as a human. Likewise, the Son of God was born of the same substance as His Father. He is God, but relationally, He is always the Son of God. There is one other difference. He is the firstborn of the created realm. We could say that He was the first to populate the created realm, both invisible and visible. In other words, He was and is truly the embodiment of the invisible (spirit) and the visible (material) realms.

As I have read commentators over the years regarding this verse, I have been left with the impression that some (perhaps, many) are afraid to go so far as I have in unveiling this truth, as if it would challenge the deity of the Son. They work their way around it by stating that *firstborn* simply means He has the status and thus the inheritance of a firstborn son. Yes, He does have the inheritance, but this is because He truly is the firstborn of all creation. Others might argue that this means He has a beginning and is not eternal. Time should not enter the picture as it relates to

God. He is! When He brought forth His Son out from Himself, there was no time, at least as far as we know. What we do know is that the ages were created in the Son: *Through Whom He also made* (formed; constructed) *the ages* (eons) (Hebrews 1:2 JMNT). In fact, He existed before anything was created, and all things were created in Him.

For in Him was created the universe of things in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers—all were created, and exist through and for Him. (Colossians 1:16 WNT)

Many translations use the preposition *by* to infer that all things were created by Him. However, the Greek can also be translated by many other prepositions, including the words *in* or *within*. Stating that all things were created *by* Him implies that He was like an inventor who took parts and assembled them into something new. But this falls far short of the reality projected by *in* Him, which speaks of far greater glory. The glory is that all things or, as Mitchell words it, the whole was created in Him. Was it all created by Him? Most definitely, it was. But even far greater, it was all created in Him, meaning the very substance of creation and, especially, of humanity is of His substance, just as He is of His Father's substance. The whole of creation, both of the natural (or, physical) and spiritual realms, is contained within Him, and He is the beginning and the end of it all, the first and the last, for everything begins in Him, proceeds through Him, and consummates IN Him. As Paul writes: *He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together* (Colossians 1:17).

Consider how Paul positions Christ, based on three different translations.

Yet we have but one God, the Father, who is the source of all things and for whose service we exist, and but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom we and all things exist. (1 Corinthians 8:6 WNT)

To the contrary, to us (for us) [there is] one God, the Father, from out of the midst of Whom [is] the whole (or: [are] all things) – and we [directed and proceeding] into Him – even one Lord (Owner; Master), Jesus Christ: through Whom [is] the whole (all things) – and we through means of Him! (1 Corinthians 8:6 JM-NT)

But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we live for Him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life. (1 Corinthians 8:6 NLT)

The Father is the source of all things, for even the Son came forth from Him. Once the Son came forth out of the midst of His Father, the Son then became the creator of the invisible and visible realms of the universe or the WHOLE of creation. I have this picture of the Son stepping out of the realm of His Father into the realm of the created, and then He began to create all things within Himself.

To bring this back to the word I received about all creation in the womb of God: The Son became the womb of God, for it is within this womb, IN HIM, that all things were (are) created. It is in Him and through Him that the WHOLE comes forth. Some might be tempted to exclude something or someone from this, but scripture does not seem to give any room for this.

Truly, this is good news. All things, the WHOLE, are in Him and exist through Him. This is the all-inclusiveness of the good news of Jesus.

'The Amen (The It-is-so), the Faithful (Trustworthy) and True Witness, the Beginning of God's Creation (or: the Origin of God's creation; the First Place or Corner God's Framing; the Beginning of God's act of building and founding; the Beginning of God's act of reducing from a state of wildness and disorder).... (Revelation 3:14 JM-NT)