

*How shall I sing that majesty
which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
Thousands of thousands stand around
thy throne, O God most high;
ten thousand times ten thousand sound
thy praise; but who am I?*

John Mason

The Pre-eminence of Christ Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

The right response to His work Colossians 1:21-29

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

He is the image of the invisible God,

No one in our present state can 'see' God -

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

We are also commanded not to make images of God

Exodus 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

But God created man in God's image

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

He is the image of the invisible God,

But this is different

John 14:9-10 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

He is the image of the invisible God,

But this is different

God has spoken and God has revealed himself in Jesus

Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation.

First born can carry two meanings

- 1, First born in family - or
 - 2, the heir to the family possessions
- cf. Jacob and Esau

*Genesis 7:32 His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?"
He (Jacob) answered, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."*

*Exodus 4:22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh,
'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son,*

He is the image of the invisible God,
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JW false teaching – ‘Jesus was the first creation’ ..NO !
He created **all** things – ie THE creator

It is explained more in later verses

John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,

He is the Creator

Creation consists of heavenly things – angel spirits–
space, stars etc.

Isaiah 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.

Earthly things – plants animals, birds, fish cf. Genesis 1
And mankind.

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible,

He is the Creator

Visible to our eyes

Invisible but non-the-less real

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.*

*Hebrews 11:27 By faith he (Moses) left Egypt,
not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured
as seeing him who is invisible.*

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or
authorities

He is the Creator

All authority structures and realms of power subject to him

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or
authorities

He is the Creator

With all authority over structures and realms of power

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

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.

Paul repeats this important truth.

All things were created by his **active word**

*Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light,"
and there was light.*

The Purpose of all this was for his pleasure, service, and glory
All things were made for the display of his glory

*Isaiah 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

And he is before all things,

He is supreme in time and status
The Eternal Son of the Father

*Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

And he is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.

He is the ACTIVE sustainer of everything

*Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God
and the exact imprint of his nature,
and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

Our lives, breath, times and circumstances are in his hands.

Acts 17:28 for “In him we live and move and have our being”;

And he is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.

He is the ACTIVE sustainer of everything and
the end of time is in his control also.

Revelation 6:14 The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And he is the head of the body, **the** church.

He is the head of his new creation

It is Organic = body-head relationship

Church = 'called out' to belong to him uniquely

Under the Headship of our Lord Jesus

John 14:15

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,

He is the source of all blessings

The start of something new - the redeemed

The firstborn (the start and owner of his raised people - the first to be resurrected as opposed to brought back to life cf. Lazarus etc.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be pre-eminent

He has to have first place in everything
Including In our lives
Discipleship means putting him first
cf. Rich young ruler's mistake

*Mark 10:22 Disheartened by the saying,
he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

For in him all the **fullness** of God was pleased to dwell,

In the person of Jesus the presence of God was there in totality (he is the Divine being)

Fullness – all we will ever need is in Him!

Pleased – Father's delight in his only-begotten Son

Dwell – permanent residence
the Word became flesh = incarnation.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,

The purpose of his first coming:-

Through the person and actions of Jesus, God intends to restore the broken and lost creation back into the right relationship with himself – in justice, and purity

Reconciliation – we the offenders – he active to restore

Romans 8:19-22 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

making peace by the blood of his cross.

This was the means to fulfil the purpose of his first coming

Sin had to be dealt with

The wages of sin = death

So death of willing substitute was necessary

Makes peace – justice satisfied – sinners saved

By blood of his cross – by means of his death

Blood atonement

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind,

Practical results relate to them and us concerning their/our original fallen state (inherited from Adam)

Even 'Nice' people are seen by God as needing Christ

Secret sins – **alienation** (keep God out)

Hostile – resist his revelation of himself

John 3:19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind,
doing evil deeds,

These are the practical results of fallen mind

*Proverbs 27:19 As in water face reflects face,
so the heart of man reflects the man.*

Evil deeds (in a pagan background they are more obvious)
But motives included – self, pride, lust, covetousness, anger
- ignoring God, being unthankful to him.

*Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder,
adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*

he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,

This is the present result **NOW** reconciled

In his human offering up to death his unblemished sacrifice

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

in order to present you holy and blameless
and above reproach before him,

The reason why he has saved us:-

Presented – a royal interview!

Qualified – holy (set apart from all sin and its effects)

Blameless – free from accusation

– from conscience and Satan's efforts

Above reproach – forgiven and forgotten

Before him (who sees everything) so it really has worked!

if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast,

Encouragement to perseverance in our time in the world

Hold on to the faith (trusting the truth/teaching and Him)

Stable –on the good foundation

1 Corinthians 3:11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Steadfast – facing the goal...

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard,

Encouragement to perseverance in our time in the world

Keep the hope (certainty) of the gospel promises
Eternal life!

Psalm 125:1

*Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.*

which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven,
and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

The expanding spread of the good news

It is intended for all (under heaven) mankind and earth

Paul – gives an introduction to next section about his ministry

Romans 10:8-11 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”