

Colossians 1:15 (NASB95) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
“THE PARADOX OF JESUS CHRIST”

Webster defines Paradox as a seemingly contradictory or absurd statement that expresses a possible truth. It is a statement that appears at first to be contradictory, but upon reflection then makes sense. Paradox is a statement or group of statements that seems to be self-contradictory as to what is logical, yet delivers the message of an inherent plausibility, truth, or meaning. Here are a few examples: less means more, the enemy of my enemy is my friend, the beginning of the end, if you don't risk anything you risk everything, the pen is mightier than the sword, the more you give, the more you get, the louder you are, the less they hear, and the only constant is change. Paradoxical statements are a means of studying and thinking that can lead to a deeper dive in comprehending truth.

God arranged for the Apostle Paul to be arrested and placed in prison so that He could apprehend his mind to understand, then write the deepest truth of the universe He created. Undoubtedly, without question the deepest truth of God given to humanity concerns the Lord Jesus Christ. This text from Colossians 1:15 has the appearance of being paradoxical or contradictory, until we focus our attention on who Paul wrote about.

In verse 1-8, Paul with his protégé Timothy, gave his customary greeting as an apostle of Jesus Christ to the saints of the church in Colossae. He commended them for their faith, love, hope of heaven, constant fruit bearing and understanding of God's grace as taught by Epaphras. In verse 9-14 Paul encouraged them to know he prayed the following for them without ceasing. He prayed to God the Father concerning the abundance of spiritual blessings they attained in the person and ministry of His beloved Son.

I. THE PARADOX OF JESUS BEING THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE.

How can there be an image of the invisible? We see the representations of others all the time. Many of you are the spitting images of someone else. Children have identifying marks of their parents. You see it in their looks. You hear it in their voice. So, that is understandable. We see images of dead presidents on money. That is understandable as Jesus declared in Matthew 22; Mark 12 and Luke 20. The religious leaders tried to trip Him up by asking if it was RIGHT to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Jesus said bring Me a denarius, Whose likeness/image and inscription do you see? And they said Caesar. And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. However, it is only through faith in God, being born again and having the presence of the Holy Spirit abiding, that you believe and understand that Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

NOTE: Norman Geisler wrote that “Image, *Eikōn* means the very substance or essential embodiment of something or someone.”¹ We use the word icon.

NOTE: George Kittel wrote in this context, “Image is not to be understood as a magnitude which is alien to the reality and present only in the consciousness. It has a share in the reality. Indeed, it is the reality. Thus, *εἰκών* does not imply a weakening or a feeble copy of something. It implies the illumination of its inner core and essence.”²

- A. The uniqueness of Jesus is the fact that He alone is “the seen” of the unseen.
- B. Jesus alone is the visible revelation of God’s invisible reality. **Hebrews 1:3**
- C. The matchless Jesus makes viewable the One who cannot be viewed.
- D. Jesus did not come to show us the physical appearance of God. He revealed and demonstrated His power, compassion, love, mercy, patience, and kindness. **John 1: 18**
 - (1) With His hands He touched the coffin of the widow of Nain’s son and raised him from the dead.
 - (2) With His tongue He tasted the food of Martha and ate with publicans and sinners.
 - (3) With His ears He heard the cry of Bartimaeus and gave him his sight.
 - (4) With His voice He spoke to the wind and the sea, and they obeyed Him.
 - (5) With His eyes He saw the great multitude coming and fed them with five barley loaves and two fish.
 - (6) With His heart He had compassion for a leper who asked for cleansing, and He healed him.

That is why on the night He was in the upper room with His disciple he declared to them in **John 14:6-9** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

A SPIRITUAL SONG: Real Real! Jesus is real to me. Oh yes He gives me the victory. So many people doubt Him but I can’t live without Him. That is why I love Him so He is so real to me.

¹ Geisler, N. L. (1985). *Colossians*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 672). Victor Books.

² Kittel, G. (1964–). *εἰκών*. In G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 389). Eerdmans.

II. THE PARADOX OF JESUS BEING THE FIRST BORN.

FIRST-BORN = prototokos = adjective nom sing masc = pertaining to being a firstborn child.' ἔτεκεν τὸν οὐλὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον 'she gave birth to her firstborn son' Lk 2:7.

NOTE: Louw and Nida wrote In Jewish society the rights and responsibilities of being a firstborn son resulted in considerable prestige and status. The firstborn son, for example, received twice as much in inheritance as any other offspring.

In this verse it's concerning the rights and privileges and prerogatives of Jesus, the Divine Son of God, relative to all creation. (Complete Biblical Library-Pi-Rho, pg. 375)

- A. God the Son has eternally existed with God the Father and became Jesus the Christ conceived by God the Holy Spirit. **John 1:1–5, John 1:14**
- B. As the only begotten of God the Father, Jesus the Son of God is also the first in creation to achieve the status of no one else.
 - (1) He is the first and only one who existed before His mother, then created His mother and chose to be born through His mother, Mary.
 - (2) He is the first and only one conceived by the Holy Spirit and without the sperm of a human father.
 - (3) He is the first and only who created His mother and father then chose to live in subjection to them.
 - (4) He is the first and only to hold the world in His hand while at the same time being held in the hands of others.
 - (5) He is the first and only one who fed all the known creatures of the world but had to drink milk from His mother's breast.
 - (6) He is the first and only one who is God a baby, God a toddler, God an adolescent, God a teenager, God a young man, God a man, God a miracle worker, God a preacher, God a teacher, and God the Savior.
 - (7) He is the first and only one that when He died the Sun stopped shining, darkness covered the land, and the earth quaked. He is the first and only one who got up from the grave when He decided, took off His grave clothes, John 20:7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.
 - (8) He is the first and only one that angels showed up at the tomb to tell His disciples He had risen from the dead. He is the first to be resurrected from the dead never to die again.
 - (9) He is the first and only one who was resurrected from the dead, talked to people, ate with people, cooked breakfast, showed Himself to five hundred at the same time.

(10) He is the first and only one who miraculously ascended back to heaven to currently sit on the right hand of His Father.

Because of this He ought to be first in your life. SONG: "There is none like You"

III. THE PARADOX OF THE CREATOR BECOMING LIKE THE CREATED.

A. The first born over all became one like the created He was over, to deliver us from the sin we brought on ourselves. **Col. 1:13-14 Phil. 2:5-8**

B. The result of Him becoming like one of us, is that we became or can become a new creation. **2 Cor. 5:17**

C. His original creation, He saw to be very good in Gen 1:31, was/is now under the sway of sin and darkness. **Rom. 5:12, Rom. 5:18-19**

D. He became a man who lived among people that were both righteous and wicked.

- (1) Some followed Him, others did not. Some rejected Him, others received Him.
- (2) He walked, talked, ate, slept, got angry, and cried.
- (3) He preached and taught them about the kingdom of God. He commended some for their faith in God and rebuked others for their lack of faith.
- (4) He had a mother, father, sisters, and brothers like any other human being. Yet what set Him apart is that, God made Him who knew no sin become sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, **2 Cor. 5:21**.

E. Only in Jesus Christ are we as His new creation provided the means to attain His image.

- (1) God the Father predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. **Rom 8:29**
- (2) Jesus Christ provides us ongoing transformation into His image through the Holy Spirit. **2Cor. 3:18**
- (3) We are promised we would bear His heavenly image into eternity. **1Cor. 15:49**
- (4) We practically live the new life according to the image of the One who created us. **Col. 3:10**