

**The Baby Who Was God
Colossians 1:15-20**

The holiday season for most people is a fun time of the year filled with parties, celebrations and social gatherings with family and friends. But for many other people, it is a time filled with sadness and weariness due to stress, fatigue, loneliness, and perhaps even an overwhelming sense of personal failure.

So is there any solution to holiday sadness, this holiday weariness? I believe that there is. And what is the solution? The baby who was God, whose birth we celebrate at this time of year, gives us the solution in **Matthew 11:28-30**.

So let me now read these verses for you. **“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

So, what is the solution to the problem of holiday sadness and weariness? The solution to the problem of holiday sadness and weariness is the same solution to all sadness and weariness from whatever the source. It is putting our faith in Christ so that we through Christ might have access to His Father, the God of all comfort.

This is in essence what Christ was extending to the weary and heavy laden when He invited them to come to Him and to take His yoke upon them and to learn from Him, for it is only through Christ and in Christ that anyone can have a personal relationship with Christ’s father with all of its accompanying benefits and blessings, which would include not only peace with God, but also the potential to experience the peace of God, if we would so choose.

So who is Christ and what did Christ do that made it possible for Him to extend this wonderful and glorious invitation to the weary and heavy laden? I believe **Colossians 1:15-20** gives us those answers. So now let me read this passage for you. **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (16) For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. (17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold**

together. (18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (19) For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, (20) and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven."

This is a amazing passage of Scripture and if we can understand it, then we certainly should be able to understand how Christ could extend the invitation that He extended to the weak and heavy laden in **Matthew 11:28-30** to come to Him and find rest for their souls.

We are now ready to consider the passage. And what will be the question that we will be seeking to answer as we examine this passage? What are the four relationships detailed for us by Paul in Colossians 1:15-20 that explains how Christ can provide rest for the souls of the weary and heavy-laden?

This is the question that we will be seeking to answer and it is interesting to note that the first three of those relationships are related to the person of Christ. So, what is the first of those three relationships that are related to the person of Christ?

The first relationship is Christ's relationship with God (Colossians 1:15; cf. Hebrews 1:3). We see this relationship detailed for us in **Colossians 1:15**. So let me read this for you. **"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."** So, what is the first thing that Paul's tells us about Christ's relationship with God?

The first thing that Paul tells us about Christ's relationship with God is this: that Christ is **"the image of the invisible God."** So, what does Paul mean by this? Let us first of all look at the word "image."

The word "image" (EIKON) means "copy" or "likeness." In other words, if an individual were able to look upon the incarnate Christ, they would have seen the visible expression of the invisible God. Isn't this exactly what Jesus said to Philip in **John 14:9**, **"He who has seen Me has seen the Father?"**

This very same thought is explained further by the writer of **Hebrews** in **Hebrews 1:3**. And what does **Hebrews 1:3** say? **"And He [referring to Christ] is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His**

nature.” So, whose glory was Christ the radiance of and whose nature was Christ the exact representation of? Christ was the radiance of the glory of God, and Christ was the exact representation of the nature of God.

In a sense, Christ is to God as the brightness of the sun is to sun itself, for just as the brightness of the sun cannot be separated from the sun neither can Christ be separated from His Father for He is the visible expression of the invisible God.

So, what was the first thing that Paul said about Christ’s relationship with God in **verse 15**? He said that Christ was “**the image of the invisible God,**” but this is not all he said. He also said that Christ was “**the firstborn of all creation.**” So, what does this mean?

When Paul told the Colossian church that Christ was the “**firstborn of all creation**” it didn’t mean that Christ was created first. So if it does not mean that, then what does it mean?

When Paul referred to Christ as the firstborn (PROTOTOKOS) of all creation, he was referring to Christ’s preeminence in position or rank over all of creation. We know this because of Paul’s use of the term “firstborn,” which translates the Greek word PROTOTOKOS, which in the Jewish culture as well as in the Greek culture was a very technical term. So, what do I mean by this? This is what I mean.

In the Jewish culture as well as in the Greek culture the firstborn was not necessarily the child that was born first but was rather the ranking son who was designated as such by his Father whether or not that particular son was born first or not.

An example of this is the nation of Israel. Even though Israel was not the first nation, Moses in **Exodus 4:22** referred to Israel as God’s firstborn among the nations, or in other words as preeminent in position and rank among the nations as designated by God. And so it is with Christ. He, in His incarnation, having been made in the image of God, is the preeminent One, the ranking one, among all of God’s creation. And this is what Paul meant by first-born.

So, what was Christ’s first relationship that Paul detailed for us in **Colossians 1:15-20** that helps to explain why Christ was able to extend the

promise of rest to the weary and heavy-laden? It was Christ's relationship with God. And what is that relationship? **"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."** So, what is the second relationship that Paul detailed for us in **Colossians 1:15-20**.

The second relationship is Christ's relationship with creation (Colossians 1:16-17). So now let us begin by reading **Colossians 1:16-17** and see if this is not so. **"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. (17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."**

Christ created the whole of the universe and there is nothing that exists that He did not create. So let me ask you a question. Should this description of Christ's relationship with creation fill us with a sense of reverential awe as we ponder the power that Christ unleashed to bring this about? Absolutely! How could it not!

And to bring this thought alive for us a little bit more let us for a moment consider the power Christ unleashed to create the celestial object that we are most familiar. And what is that celestial object? It is our very own sun.

So let me ask you this question. How big is our sun? It is this big. If you were to empty it we could put inside of it one million, two hundred thousand earths and still have room for four million, three-hundred thousand moons. Now that is big! And who created it? Christ created it as an expression of His mighty power, the very one whose birth we are now celebrating.

But I would not be doing justice to Christ's creative power if I stopped with our sun and why is that? I would not be doing justice to Christ's creative power if I stopped with our sun because our sun is only one of approximately 10 billion trillion other stars in the known universe that Christ created and this does not even include all the various planets that are orbiting around those stars nor the moons that are orbiting around those planets and so on and so forth.

So who made all this stuff? What does **Colossians 1:16** tell us? It tells us this, **"For by Him [Christ] all things were created, both in heaven and on earth."** And then what did Paul say?

He said this: “**visible and invisible.**” In other words, when we consider what Christ created we should not limit it to what we can see for that is just the tip of the iceberg, for the reality is this, that there is a spiritual realm that Christ also created that we cannot see that Paul grouped together in various classifications that he referred to “**thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities.**”

So as we ponder the power that Christ unleashed to create all that exists both visible and invisible should it fill us with a sense of reverential awe? How could it not! Such power is beyond our ability to even minimally appreciate.

So why did Christ, as He did in this incomprehensible display of power, create all of this stuff? Let us again look at **verse 16** but this time let us look at the very end of the verse. “**All things have been created through Him and for Him,**” or in other words for the good of Christ and for His own good pleasure and for His own purposes.

Can we now understand why Christ is the first-born, or in other words the first born over all creation? How could he not be the first-born or the preeminent one over all of creation? Everything that exists, visible or invisible has been created by Christ and for Christ for His glory and to accomplish His purposes.

But Paul was not finished with his description of Christ’s relationship to His creation. Let us now continue to read **Colossians 1:17**. “**He is before all things** [Of course He is before all things He had to be since He was the one who had created all things. And then it says...], **and in Him all things hold together.**”

When Paul said that Christ holds all things together he was saying that the visible created universe would not be able to continue as we know it if He did not sustain it.

So let us just for a moment consider the earth and how important it is for us, that God would continue to sustain the earth as He originally suspended it, in the infinite reaches of space.

Let us first of all consider the earth’s rotation. How important is it that the earth rotation remain just as it is? Extremely! For instance if the earth’s

rotation slowed down, we would alternately freeze and burn. But this hasn't happened has it? Why? Christ has sustained it.

But this is not all that Christ is sustaining. Consider the earth's distance from the sun. The sun has a surface temperature of 12 thousand degrees Fahrenheit. If we get any closer we're not going to like it or if we got any further away we're not going to like it. But this has not happened has it? Why? Christ has sustained it.

And still this is not all. Our earth is tilted at an exact angle of 23 degrees, which enables us to have four seasons. And what is the significance of that? If the earth were not tilted at that exact angle, the oceans would move north and south and pile up as massive continents of ice on both ends thus creating major rotational problems, which would ultimately end in our deaths. But this has not happened has it? Why? Christ has sustained it as He sustains everything in the known universe that He has created.

So, what was the first relationship related to the person of Christ that Paul detailed for us in **Colossians 1:15-20** that helps explain why Christ was able to extend the promise of rest to the weary and heavy-laden in **Matthew 11:28-30**? It was this: It was Christ's relationship with God. And what is that relationship? **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”**

And what was the second relationship also related to the person of Christ that Paul detailed for us in **Colossians 1:15-20** that helps explain to us why Christ was able to extend the promise as rest to the weary and heaven-laden in **Matthew 11:28-30**? The second relationship is Christ's relationship with creation. And what was that relationship? He is the creator and sustainer of it.

So, what is the third relationship also related to the person of Christ that Paul detailed for us in **Colossians 1:15-20** that helps explain to us why Christ was able to extend the promise to the weary and heaven-laden in **Matthew 11:28-30**?

The third relationship is Christ's relationship with the Church (Colossians 1:18). So now let me read for you **Colossians 1:18** and see if this is not so. **“He is also the head of the body, the church.”**

So, what does Paul mean by this? He simply means that just as the physical head is preeminent over the physical members of the physical body so also is Christ preeminent over the spiritual members of His spiritual body the Church.

But this is not the only thing that Paul said about Christ's relationship with the church. He also said that Christ **"is the beginning."** So, what did Paul mean by this?

He meant that Christ was the beginning of the church. He is the source of the church. In **Matthew 16** Jesus told His disciples that He would build His church and that is the idea here. In other words, Jesus is not just the head of the church, the preeminent One, He is also the creator of church. This is what Jesus meant by being **"the beginning."**

And then Paul goes on to say concerning Christ that He is **"the firstborn from the dead."** And there we find the word "firstborn" (PROTOTOKOS) once again.

Wow! Not only was Christ the PROTOTOKOS or the preeminent One over creation, and over the church, but Paul tells us that He was even the PROTOTOKOS, the preeminent one among all those who would one day be resurrected from the dead. And why was this?

Let us continue to read **verse 18** and what does it say? **"So that He Himself will come to have first place in everything"** and that is exactly the way it should be. And why is that? Let me now read for you **verse 19**. **"For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,"** or in other words, for all the fullness of God to dwell in Him, His incarnate Son whose birth we are now celebrating.

Up to this point Paul had been detailing relationships that pertained to the person of Christ, or in other words to His relationship with God, with creation, and the church. But now we come to a totally different kind of relationship not related to the person of Christ but to the work of Christ. And what is this fourth relationship that Paul will now detail for us that is not so much related to His person but rather His work? It is this: The fourth relationship is Christ's relationship to salvation (Colossians 1:20).

So now let me read for you **Colossians 1:20**. “**And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.**”

Why did it please God the Father to send His Son, the preeminent One, into this world and to provide for Him a body of flesh, in which the fullness of God dwelt?

It pleased the Father to send His Son, and provide for Him a body of flesh, in which the fullness of God might dwell so that He, through His cross, or in other words through His death, might pay the debt of sin, so that not only sinners might be reconciled to Him but the whole of His creation might be reconciled to Him. Isn't this exactly what this verse says? Absolutely!

So now let us go back to where we began. We are now in the midst of our holiday season and for many people this is a time of celebration, but it certainly is not for all. For many this time of year can be a very sad time of year.

So, what is the solution to the problem of holiday sadness weariness? The solution to the problem of holiday sadness and weariness is the same solution to all sadness and weariness from whatever the source it may come. It is putting our faith in Christ so that we through Christ might have access to Christ's Father, the God of all comfort, so that we in gaining access might not only experience peace with God but the peace of God.

And how can we be confident that we through Christ can gain access to all of this? We can be confident that we will be able to gain access to all of this through Christ based on everything that Paul told us about the person and His wonderful work in **Colossians 1:15-20**.

May all those here among us who are weary and heavy by the grace of God choose to enter into the rest that Christ the preeminent One has made possible through the blood of His cross.