

**Colossians 1: 15-18; “Christ the Firstborn”, A Sermon Delivered at the
Premier Estates Nursing Home by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on the afternoon of October 16th, 2016.**

This afternoon I want to set before you the greatness and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is most certainly the greatest man who has ever lived, in all of human history. Indeed, even now, He lives ruling and reigning over all the world. On the third day after his death, He was raised up again, after His awful crucifixion on the cross of Calvary. And after 40 days of showing Himself alive to His disciples, He ascended on high where He is presently seated at the right hand of the Father. How did He come to have this highest of all positions in heaven and earth? He came have to have it because it was the Father’s purpose to do this great thing; to raise Him up to this highest of positions, in the highest of all places, because He was worthy of it. God the Father has decided that Jesus, the Son of God, our Redeemer, is worthy of all praise and honor, worship and obedience, because He was His Firstborn. What does this word, “Firstborn” mean? It is mentioned twice in the verses that I just read to you. Well, 1st of all, we need to understand that the Father appointed the Son as the Firstborn over all creation. And 2nd, the Father has also appointed the Son to be the Firstborn from the dead. Let me proceed now to open up these precious and lofty truths for you, so that you might better understand the basis of this great salvation that I preach to you.

1st of all – The Father has appointed the Son to be the Firstborn over all creation.
(verses 15-17)

“Christ is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn over all creation.” “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.” “All things were created through Him and for Him.” “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” Now let us carefully consider what is being said here. What is being said, is not that Christ is the greatest of all created beings, for it says here that He is the image of the invisible God, and that by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth. Rather, what is being said is that Christ was set apart from eternity past to be the image of the invisible God. That He, the second Person of the Divine Trinity would perfectly represent the Father in His being and attributes, to men who were to be created in the image and likeness of God. The Lord Jesus was not created by the Father, for how can the created become a creator? It is simply not possible. But what is being said here is that Christ was appointed by the Father to be the Firstborn over all created things. He is the Firstborn because He was brought forth as the Father’s firstborn, being eternally brought forth by the Father; set apart to His holy work as the only Mediator between God and Man in the eternal decrees of the Godhead. This is what the words, “only begotten of the Father” mean. John 1: 18 says: “No one has seen God at any time.” “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

Christ actually began declaring the Father’s glory, in the creation of the world. Before time began The Son was brought forth to this highest of positions, of being the Firstborn in relation to the creation of all things, and the redemption of all of God’s elect. In eternity past, before there was ever a world of men, there was present with Father, the Second Person of the Divine Trinity who was and is united in essence and glory with Him. He was united in the purposes and plans of the Father to create the world and to create man in His own image and likeness. All of these things were purposed together by the triune God; that the only-begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father would be the Father’s highest reason for entering in to the creation of the world and the creation of mankind. In the Father’s holy mind, all things that were to be created were to be placed under His Son as the Firstborn; the One whom He brought forth before all

creation, and because He would display His glory through God the Son. God's purpose would be, that all things would be created through the Son and for the Son. All things then were indeed created by the Son as He was appointed by the Father to be their first cause; and they were created for Him as their last end, the reason and the goal of all of their existence."

All the things in the physical and material universe; the sun, the moon, the stars, the atmosphere around the earth, and all things in the heaven of heavens were created by God the Father, through His Son. All the things that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, were created by Him; all of the angels who are spirit beings whose place of primary residence is in the heavenly places, were created through Him and for Him. All of these He created upright in righteousness. But some of those angels fell with Satan, due to their pride, at the beginning of the world. And they continue to roam to and fro throughout the whole earth, seeking to hinder people from obtaining salvation. Those angels who are good, stood in their original righteousness in which they were created, and they are those who sent out by the Father and the Son to render help to those who will inherit salvation. Then, too, all living things that we see around us, here upon the earth, were created by the Father, through the Son; all the trees and shrubs and vegetation and plants, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all animals great and small, were created through the Son.

And last, but not least, all the people who have ever lived, whether male or female, great or small, would find their existence stemming from the Lord God's creating the first pair, Adam and Eve, and placing them in the garden of Eden. All people are descended from Adam as our Federal or Representative Head. It was none other than God the Son who in pre-incarnate form, it says in Genesis 2: 7, "formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. It was the Son of God who caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and as a skillful and wise Divine Surgeon, took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. And from that rib, He fashioned the first woman and brought her to the man, and she became his wife. The Words, "the Lord God" include the Father and the Spirit in this great work of creation. But here in our text it says that it was primarily done by the One who is described for us here as being the very image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

So the firstborn of all creation, or the "firstborn of every creature means that He was brought forth before any creatures had their being, and that He is the "first Parent", or "first Creator" bringer forth of every creature into being. "Being God's firstborn, He is heir of all things." "The right of government belongs to Him; He is higher than the kings of the earth, or the angels the heaven, higher than the highest rank of creatures, being the Creator and upholder of all." "He is before all things and in Him all things consist." Our Lord upholds all the things that He has created. I would apply it to you in this way: Do you see, my friends, just how great a being our Lord Jesus Christ really is? He existed before any created thing or being had existence. And indeed they have their existence from Him as He is God and not merely a man. We owe Him our worship for who He is; that is God. But we also owe Him our worship because His purpose from all eternity was to do the will of the Father and be brought forth as the love of God to a lost and fallen world of sinners.

Yes, let us understand that God knew from the foundation of the world that Adam would not be able to stand in his own righteousness; that he would fall, and not be able to recover himself from that fall. The Son saw what He would need to do, even then in eternity, before anything came into being or had a conscious existence. In Revelation 4, verse 10 it says that the twenty four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Let us not be deceived. All things were created by the will of God the Father, in perfect unity of purpose, with the will of God the Son. They are one in unity and purpose. Let us believe this truth of the perfect unity of the Divine Trinity concerning the creation of the world that everything created was created for the Son, by the Son, and through the Son. Let us not be Arians who do not believe in the Deity of Christ. Let us believe what the Word of God tells us. For how can Jesus Christ save a people from their sins without His being God? But we should glory in the fact that He is, for our salvation is most certain if Jesus Christ is God.

Now 2nd - The Father has also appointed the Son to be the Firstborn from the dead.

Verse 18 says – “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” Christ is the head of the body the Church. He is the head over all of God’s elect people; those chosen from before the foundation of the world by the Father that Christ might redeem them by His perfect obedience to God’s holy law, and His being punished on the cross for our sins. He is our head in that He represented all of God’s elect people in righteousness and sufferings, and in His rising from the dead, after having accomplished our great redemption. In this regard He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. For, although He was not the first person ever to be raised from the dead, He was the firstborn among many brethren, He alone having accomplished redemption for this very purpose; that all who had been raised from the dead before, were raised on the basis of the efficacy of His death, and His resurrection. They will be raised on the most certain basis of His merit and His power accomplishing all things on their behalf, and applying them retroactively. All those who would be raised after Christ was raised from the dead will be raised by the efficacy of what He had already most certainly accomplished on their behalf, and it will be applied to them in the general resurrection of all the dead.

There is great glory and power which has been displayed by Christ in His rising from the dead, and all Christians being able, by the Spirit’s working, to see from the word of God and the experience of His power, in His raising them from the dead spiritually in their hearts in the New Birth, that He is One whom they have now come to see as deserving of the preeminence. The Lord Jesus has surpassed all other men in His perfect righteousness. He is distinguished by the Father from all others as worthy of being the firstborn from among the dead, for He alone was able to fulfill all righteousness, and reconcile us to the Father; we being alienated from Him by our evil thoughts and works. Jesus alone, the God-Man, could bring in an everlasting righteousness and make an end of all of our sins by His sacrifice on the cross. Listen to Hebrews chapter 2, verse 10 – “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Truly, this is what all believers should glory in at all times, that if you have believed the gospel, you have been brought into spiritual union with your Lord Jesus Christ. We who are being sanctified are set apart to His powerful working, to make us holy, and to know His love and kindness in supplying us with grace day by day. We should glory in the fact that He is not ashamed to call us His brethren. Let us be thankful that we have been shown such mercy. See how great a salvation it is, that God the Father has bestowed upon us through our Lord Jesus Christ. It began in the mind of God; in the counsels of the Father and the Son about His becoming the Firstborn of all creation. This led to His making the first man and giving him the first promise of salvation when he fell into sin. The Son’s taking upon Himself a human nature in His incarnation and living His life perfectly to the glory of God on your behalf are truths which we ought to continue marvel over, and worship God because of His great purposes in grace. Christ’s humility led him to work out a perfect obedience to God’s holy law on your behalf. And His sufferings purchased your redemption; your being brought back out from your

slavery in sin, to the freedom of one of the sons of God. He was raised for your justification. And He lives so that you might know His life in your life; the power and glory of grace and mercy and peace and blessing being given to you every day. “For whom God the Father foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Christ’s being the firstborn means that you should give Him the preeminent place in your heart, that all of His glorious work of grace might be seen in you, and that you might live to His glory every day until you see Him face to face.