



Of all the images and paintings of Christ that exist, none really depict the **“image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” Colossians 1:15**. Human nature, being what it is, thinks of a picture, depicting the physical appearance of Jesus when we hear the word “image.” What Paul describes in **Colossians 1:15-23** is Christ's unique greatness in relation to creation. Paul was confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus so he sees and describes Jesus as the eternal Son of the Father who is in possession of the Father's Divine characteristics. Jesus is not some sort of “junior God” or of a lesser glory. The word “image” means more than being like God, Jesus is God.

Epiphany means “manifestation” or a “shining forth” revealing Jesus in His incarnation to be the promised Savior. Jesus is God Himself who came into human flesh, that is, fully human like all of us. Jesus is revealed to all as the God/Man, our consolation the One sent by God into this world to be our Redeemer and Savior.

“For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” Colossians 1:19, St. Paul proclaims under inspiration of The Holy Spirit. Genesis teaches that our first parents, Adam and Eve were created in the “image” of God. The image of God was that Adam and Eve truly knew God, as He wished to be known and they were perfectly happy in Him. They were righteous and holy, doing God's will, they were completely without sin. The image of God, their holiness was lost in the fall into sin. Their ability to know God and to please Him was destroyed. God has begun to restore the image of God in Christ and His work, but will only be fully restored for us in heaven.

The “image” of God in man was created by God and was something that flowed from God to man. It is a reflection of God's glory and holiness. But that image, given by God to man, is lost in the fall into sin. Christ, however, was not created in the image of God. The image of God, possessed by Christ, is an essential part of His very being for He is God Himself, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit from before eternity. **In St. John 10:30 Jesus says, “I and the Father are one.”** The sacred writer of **Hebrews 1:3** writes: **“He (Jesus) 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...”** Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” because Jesus is God.

Therefore, it is not correct to say “Jesus is created” as some of the world's false religions claim. This was the issue troubling the Colossians, the reason for Paul's letter. The Son of God possesses the “image of the invisible God” who is from everlasting to everlasting, which means the Son of God Himself is also from everlasting to everlasting. Jesus, the Son of God, is above all people, above time and space. Paul confesses the very same thing we do in The Nicene Creed, that Jesus is; **“God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being in one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.”**

Jesus, as the “image of the invisible God,” is the revelation of God to us; revealed for our salvation. Jesus is the Creator of all things as is made clear in all of His wonderful works. In Jesus, God has made Himself known to the world as He assumes human nature, like us in every way, only without sin, coming to earth to make the Father known to men. Through the love of God, Jesus comes into human flesh, the God/Man to give His love and grace in His person and work through the work of Redemption and Salvation on His cross.

In and through Jesus, we sinners come to see and know the invisible and unapproachable God. All who come to know God, know Him through Jesus Christ. When the Scripture says, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1:15)** it does not mean Jesus is a created being. The text does not say “first-created” but “firstborn.” The word “firstborn” means Jesus is above every created being. Jesus is before all creatures because He is eternal, without beginning and without end. Those who were causing confusion among the Colossians were placing attention upon the ranks of spiritual beings, such as angels. As Paul teaches, Jesus is above them all because He Himself is the very Creator. Because the angels and all other created beings, (humans) are made by Him, all of us are subject to Him. **The Gospel of John 1:1-3** teaches that Jesus was present and involved in the Creation of the world. This Word made flesh is the Word incarnate revealing God's Grace in the sacred page.

**O Word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky:
We praise You for the radiance That from the hallowed page.
A lantern to our footsteps, Shines on from age to age.”**

LSB 523 “O Word Of God Incarnate” stanza 1

In Christ, Pastor