

Colossians 1:15-20

The long prayer/thought/sentence that began in 1:9 continues into verse 1:15.

Thanks for the kingdom in 1:12 continues as the king is described beginning in 1:15.

Two parts of the Christological poem/hymn:

1. He is the image of the invisible God
2. He is the head of the body, the church

1:15-20 – This sends Paul off on one of the greatest NT Christological passages. There are two parts of this Christological poem/hymn:

1. He is the image of the invisible God
2. He is the head of the body, the church

1:15 – “**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**”

3739 [e]	1510 [e]	1504 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	3588 [e]	517 [e]	4416 [e]	3956 [e]	2937 [e]
Hos	estin	eikōn	tou	Theou	tou	aoratou	prōtotokos	pasēs	ktiseōs
15 Ὅς	ἐστίν	εἰκὼν	τοῦ	Θεοῦ	τοῦ	ἀοράτου	, πρωτότοκος	πάσης	κτίσεως ,
[He]	is	[the] image	of the	God	-	invisible	[the] firstborn	over all	creation
RelPro-NMS	V-PIA-3S	N-NFS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Art-GMS	Adj-GMS	Adj-NMS	Adj-GFS	N-GFS

1. **eikon** – “**the image**” has two basic meanings that sent the word into two directions:
 - a. Representation, a symbol of the object pictured
 - b. Manifestation, more than a symbol, but instead an appearance. This is God completely, accurately manifested in Jesus.
2. Here **eikon** means the invisible, timeless nature and character of god perfectly revealed, visible, understood. Also,
 - a. John 1:18 – “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.”
 - b. 2 Cor. 4:4, 6 – “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ... For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - c. Hebrew 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”

3739 [e]	1510 [e]	541 [e]	3588 [e]	1391 [e]	2532 [e]	5481 [e]	3588 [e]	5287 [e]	846 [e]	5342 [e]
hos	ōn	apaugasma	tēs	doxēs	kai	charaktēr	tēs	hypostaseōs	autou	pherōn
3 ὅς	ὄν	ἀπαύγασμα	τῆς	δόξης	καὶ	χαρακτήρ	τῆς	ὑποστάσεως	αὐτοῦ	, φέρων
who	being	[the] radiance	of [His]	glory	and	[the] exact expression	of the	substance	of Him	upholding
RelPro-NMS	V-PPA-NMS	N-NNS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Conj	N-NMS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	PPro-GM3S	V-PPA-NMS

5037 [e]	3588 [e]	3956 [e]	3588 [e]	4487 [e]	3588 [e]	1411 [e]	1223 [e]	846 [e]	2512 [e]	3588 [e]	266 [e]
te	ta	panta	tō	rhēmati	tēs	dynamēōs	di'	autou	katharismōn	tōn	hamartiōn
τε	τὰ	πάντα	τῷ	ῥήματι	τῆς	δυνάμεως	δι'	αὐτοῦ	, καθαρισμὸν	τῶν	ἁμαρτιῶν
then	-	all things	by the	word	of the	power	through	of Himself	[the] purification	-	of sins
Conj	Art-ANP	Adj-ANP	Art-DNS	N-DNS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Prep	PPro-GM3S	N-AMS	Art-GFP	N-GFP

4160 [e]	2523 [e]	1722 [e]	1188 [e]	3588 [e]	3172 [e]	1722 [e]	5308 [e]
poiēsamenos	ekathisen	en	dexia	tēs	Megalōsynēs	en	hypsēlois
ποιησάμενος	, ἐκάθισεν	ἐν	δεξιᾷ	τῆς	Μεγαλωσύνης	ἐν	ὑψηλοῖς .
having made	sat down	at	[the] right hand	of the	Majesty	on	high
V-APM-NMS	V-AIA-3S	Prep	Adj-DFS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Prep	Adj-DMP

- i. “radiance” – apaugasma – means “radiance” as “a light flashing forth or from something”, “gleam”
 - ii. “exact imprint” or “exact representation” or “the express image” –
 1. Greek - *character* - defined as “a tool for engraving” used to say “an impression”, “representation”, “exact reproduction”, “a graving-tool”
 2. The word properly means “engraving” but is used to refer to “an exact impression or likeness which ALSO reflects the INNER CHARACTER.”
3. **eikon** is being formed in people of Christ by indwelling Spirit –
- a. 2 Cor.3:18 – “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image (**eikona**) from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”
 - b. Col. 3:10 – “and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image (**eikona**) of its creator.”
 - c. Eph. 4:24 – “and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”
4. “**firstborn**” is *prototokos* and is used 130 times in LXX in genealogies and historical narratives to indicate priority and sovereignty of rank.
- a. “Firstborn” indicates a special place in the father’s family covenant.
 - b. “Firstborn” is priority of rank.
 - c. Psalm 89:27 “make him my firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”
 - d. Proverbs 8 - “Wisdom of God is given this same place as Jesus in Proverbs 8

1:16 – “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.”

3754 [e]	1722 [e]	846 [e]	2936 [e]	3588 [e]	3956 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	3772 [e]	2532 [e]	1909 [e]	3588 [e]	1093 [e]
hoti	en	autō	ektisthē	ta	panta	en	tois	ouranois	kai	epi	tēs	gēs
16 ὅτι	ἐν	αὐτῷ	ἐκτίσθη	τὰ	πάντα	ἐν	τοῖς	οὐρανοῖς	καὶ	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς ,
because	in	Him	were created	-	all things	in	the	heavens	and	upon	the	earth
Conj	Prep	PPro-DM3S	V-AIP-3S	Art-NNP	Adj-NNP	Prep	Art-DMP	N-DMP	Conj	Prep	Art-GFS	N-GFS

3588 [e]	3707 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	517 [e]	1535 [e]	2362 [e]	1535 [e]	2963 [e]	1535 [e]	746 [e]	1535 [e]
ta	horata	kai	ta	aorata	eite	thronoi	eite	kyriotētes	eite	archai	eite
τὰ	ὄρατὰ	καὶ	τὰ	ἀόρατα ,	εἴτε	θρόνοι	εἴτε	κυριότητες	εἴτε	ἄρχαι	εἴτε
the	visible	and	the	invisible	whether	thrones	or	dominions	or	rulers	or
Art-NNP	Adj-NNP	Conj	Art-NNP	Adj-NNP	Conj	N-NMP	Conj	N-NFP	Conj	N-NFP	Conj

1849 [e]	3588 [e]	3956 [e]	1223 [e]	846 [e]	2532 [e]	1519 [e]	846 [e]	2936 [e]
exousiai	ta	panta	di'	autou	kai	eis	auton	ektistai
ἐξουσίαι ;	τὰ	πάντα	δι'	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	εἰς	αὐτὸν	ἔκτισται .
authorities	-	all things	through	Him	and	unto	Him	have been created
N-NFP	Art-NNP	Adj-NNP	Prep	PPro-GM3S	Conj	Prep	PPro-AM3S	V-RIM/P-3S

1. *Oti* – “because”, “for” - the proof of his supremacy “FOR” or “BECAUSE” (“oti”).
2. *en auto* is “in him” or “by him” meaning he is the sphere.
3. *Panta* is “all things”
 - a. Used 2x in this verse
 - b. “all things” was used in Paul’s day as the word “universe” is used by us in our day.
 - c. *Panta* means the totality of creation
4. Three phrases indicate the relationship of his person and his acts for stating his supremacy:
 - a. “in him” or “by him” (1:16a) refers to “in his mind” or “in his sphere of influence and responsibility.”
 - i. In what was eternally him and his.
 - ii. Jesus conceived of creation and all that it is and would be.
 - iii. Jesus was the architect and engineer of creation.
 - b. “through him” or “by him” (1:16b) means he produced his idea with his power and his ability.
 - i. John 1:1
 - ii. Hebrews 1:1-3 3.
 - c. “for him” (1:16b) the goal of all of creation was for his purpose and plan.
5. “Heaven” is the unseen, spiritual heavenlies of Eph.1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10, non-material world.
6. “Earth” is the temporal world.
7. Spiritual beings and classes of angelic beings.
 - a. These have dominant place in this epistle
 - b. Discussed in 2:8-3:4
 - i. Thrones –
 - ii. Powers - Dominion – *kyriotetos* – lordship, domination, dignity.
 1. It refers to lordship and is used only 4x in the NT to identify divine or angelic lordship, domination, dignity.
 2. Most often it is used with reference to a celestial hierarchy:

- a. Ep. 1:21
 - b. Colossians 1:16 –
 - c. 2 Peter 2:10 – “and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.”
 - d. Jude 1:8 – “Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.”
- iii. “Rulers” – *archas* – from *arche* defined as “beginning, origin” and used to refer to “rule in the kingly or magisterial sense” and quasi-personal (“quasi” meaning “seemingly” “apparently but not really”) sense as “rulers” and “magistrates” and then simply as “beginning”.
- iv. Authorities – *exousias* – power, authority, weight.
1. It refers to power and authority especially moral authority and influence.
 2. In later Judaism it developed into use as a spiritual power and soon was used to refer to a temporal, governmental power.
 3. This word *exousia* is built with;
 - a. the preposition *ek-* (meaning “out from”) intensifying the word *eimi*.
 - b. *eimi* which means “to be” or “being as a right/privilege” making the full word mean “conferred power”, “given authority”, “delegated empowerment” and “operating in a designated jurisdiction.”
 - c. Matthew 7:29 says Jesus spoke as one having authority; Matthew 8:9 the Centurion said he was a man under authority.
 - d. It is used 102 times in the NT and translated as authorities (7x) authority (65) charge, control, domain, dominion, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right.

1:17 – “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

2532 [e]	846 [e]	1510 [e]	4253 [e]	3956 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	3956 [e]	1722 [e]	846 [e]	4921 [e]			
Kai	autos	estin	pro	pantōn	kai	ta	panta	en	autō	synestēken			
17	Καὶ	αὐτός	ἐστίν	πρὸ	πάντων	,	καὶ	τὰ	πάντα	ἐν	αὐτῷ	συνέστηκεν	.
	And	He	is	before	all things		and	-	all things	in	Him	hold together	
	Conj	PPro-NM3S	V-PIA-3S	Prep	Adj-GNP		Conj	Art-NNP	Adj-NNP	Prep	PPro-DM3S	V-RIA-3S	

1. The son was existing before the created things were created. This is repeating, in some sense, what is said in 1:15 in the expression “firstborn over all creation.”
2. The son is not only the beginning creator of everything. But, the functioning system we exist in today is holding together because of him. So, Jesus is not only the creator of a system, he is also the means by which the system continues.
 - a. The system finds Reality in Jesus
 - b. 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.”
 - c. Creation is the cosmos (which means both “order” and “world, world system”) instead of the chaos because of Jesus.

1:18 – “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 preeminent.”

2532 [e]	846 [e]	1510 [e]	3588 [e]	2776 [e]	3588 [e]	4983 [e]	3588 [e]	1577 [e]	3739 [e]	1510 [e]	3588 [e]
kai	autos	estin	hē	kephalē	tou	sōματος	tēs	ekklēsias	hos	estin	hē
18 καὶ	αὐτός	ἐστὶν	ἡ	κεφαλὴ	τοῦ	σώματος	, τῆς	ἐκκλησίας	, ὅς	ἐστὶν	(ἡ)
And	He	is	the	head	of the	body	, the	church	, who	is	the
Conj	PPro-NM3S	V-PIA-3S	Art-NFS	N-NFS	Art-GNS	N-GNS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	RelPro-NMS	V-PIA-3S	Art-NFS

746 [e]	4416 [e]	1537 [e]	3588 [e]	3498 [e]	2443 [e]	1096 [e]	1722 [e]	3956 [e]	846 [e]	4409 [e]	
archē	prōtotokos	ek	tōn	nekrōn	hina	genētai	en	pasin	autos	prōteuōn	
ἀρχὴ	, πρωτότοκος	ἐκ	τῶν	νεκρῶν	, ἵνα	γένηται	ἐν	πᾶσιν	αὐτὸς	πρωτεύων	,
beginning	firstborn	out from	the	dead	, so that	might be	in	all things	He	holding preeminence	
N-NFS	Adj-NMS	Prep	Art-GMP	Adj-GMP	Conj	V-ASM-3S	Prep	Adj-DNP	PPro-NM3S	V-PPA-NMS	

- Since Jesus is the Creator of the universe, Paul now identifies him as the Creator of the new creation, the born again believers, the church.
- “Church” is *ekklesia*, which means “assembly” “congregation” and is used to refer to the redeemed people from the first creation into the new creation.
- “Body” – the church is the living body of which Christ is a part.
 - A living organism with many connected and functioning parts
 - The body by which God is operating in history and the whole universe
 - The Son and the members of the church (believers) are very much connected and functioning together just like parts of a human body all move together, live together, die together...and, are resurrected together which leads into the phrase “first born out from the dead”
- “firstborn” – *prototokos* – already used in verse 15 in reference to creation. Now used of the Church.
 - Prototokos, firstborn, means both:
 - Precedence in time
 - Supremacy in rank
 - Because his people share in him they have also died, resurrected and been born from the dead with him. (1 Corinthians 15:20)
- “out from” – *ek* – Jesus (and, his people) were taken “out from the dead” or “out from among the dead”
 - Philippians 3:11 – “that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead”

1487 [e]	4459 [e]	2658 [e]	1519 [e]	3588 [e]	1815 [e]	3588 [e]	1537 [e]	3498 [e]	
ei	pōs	katantēsō	eis	tēn	exanastasin	tēn	ek	nekrōn	
11 εἴ	, πῶς	, καταντήσω	εἰς	τὴν	ἐξανάστασιν	τὴν	ἐκ	νεκρῶν	.
if	by any means	I may attain	to	the	resurrection	-	out from	dead	
Conj	Adv	V-ASA-1S	Prep	Art-AFS	N-AFS	Art-AFS	Prep	Adj-GMP	

- Resurrection out from among the dead.

1:19 – “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,”

	3754 [e]	1722 [e]	846 [e]	2106 [e]	3956 [e]	3588 [e]	4138 [e]	2730 [e]
	hoti	en	autō	eudokēsen	pan	to	plērōma	katoikēsai
19	ὅτι	ἐν	αὐτῷ	εὐδόκησεν	πᾶν	τὸ	πλήρωμα	κατοικῆσαι ,
	because	in	Him	was pleased	all	the	fullness	to dwell
	Conj	Prep	PPro-DM3S	V-AIA-3S	Adj-ANS	Art-ANS	N-ANS	V-ANA

1:20 – “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

	2532 [e]	1223 [e]	846 [e]	604 [e]	3588 [e]	3956 [e]	1519 [e]	846 [e]	1517 [e]	1223 [e]	3588 [e]	129 [e]	3588 [e]
	kai	di'	autou	apokatallaxai	ta	panta	eis	auton	eirēnopoīēsas	dia	tou	haimatos	tou
20	καὶ	δι'	αὐτοῦ	ἀποκατάλλαξαι	τὰ	πάντα	εἰς	αὐτόν ,	εἰρηνοποιήσας	διὰ	τοῦ	αἵματος	τοῦ
	and	by	Him	to reconcile	-	all things	to	Himself	having made peace	by	the	blood	of the
	Conj	Prep	PPro-GM3S	V-ANA	Art-ANP	Adj-ANP	Prep	PPro-AM3S	V-APA-NMS	Prep	Art-GNS	N-GNS	Art-GMS

	4716 [e]	846 [e]	1223 [e]	846 [e]	1535 [e]	3588 [e]	1909 [e]	3588 [e]	1093 [e]	1535 [e]	3588 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	3772 [e]
	staurou	autou	di'	autou	eite	ta	epi	tēs	gēs	eite	ta	en	tois	ouranois
	σταυροῦ	αὐτοῦ ,	δι'	αὐτοῦ ,	εἴτε	τὰ	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς ,	εἴτε	τὰ	ἐν	τοῖς	οὐρανοῖς .
	cross	of Him	through	Him	whether	the things	on	the	earth	or	the things	in	the	heavens
	N-GMS	PPro-GM3S	Prep	PPro-GM3S	Conj	Art-ANP	Prep	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Conj	Art-ANP	Prep	Art-DMP	N-DMP

1:21-23 – Paul compares what we now have to what we did have.

1. Paul warns the Colossians the danger of losing this spiritual dynamo.
2. He is not warning of losing their salvation.

1:24 – Paul begins to discuss his ministry.