

:00 (15) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

(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.

(19) For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.

(21) And you --- who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds --- He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him [the Father], if indeed you --- continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the Gospel --- which He proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Think on these things:

- 1) What does God look like --- v.15 offers an answer?! Consider these verses:

Exodus 33:20 - _____

John 1:18 - _____

John 14:9 – 10 _____

1 Timothy 6:16 _____

Hebrews 1:3-4 _____

- 2) Now consider 1 John 4:12. How does this verse mirror what Jesus said in John 14:9 to Phillip?

- 3) The second part of v.15 is a little challenging. Doctrinally, what does it mean to refer to Jesus as the “firstborn”? The context of Psalm 89:19-37 is about God choosing David and allowing his offspring to rule forever. Look at Psalm 89:27, and this is what many scholars consider the New Testament use of firstborn. How does Psalm 89:27 use the term firstborn? (The NIV translation uses “over” instead of “of”, which is consistent with Philippians 2:9-10.) See also Hebrews 1:6. The meaning of “firstborn” from these verses is that Jesus is,

Psalm 89:27 - _____

Hebrews 1:6 - _____

4) From v.16, what things in God's creation were created by Jesus? Consider Genesis 1:26; John 1:3, 10; and Hebrews 1:1-2. How does what we learn here in v.16 validate scientific discoveries of our own age?

5) The last phrase of v.17 reflects an important doctrine to understand: "**We believe** that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship." What has Jesus always done for our world? See also Hebrews 1:3.

6) How is the Body of Christ defined in v.18, and what is Jesus' position over the Body?

7) In what way is Jesus the "beginning"? Describe what we know about the new life we will have in heaven. See Luke 20:34-36 and 24:36-44, and John 20:19-20, 26-27.

The Beginning? - _____

New life? - _____

8) Why does Paul say that Jesus is the "beginning" in terms of new life (v.18b)?

People and situations I want to pray for this week: